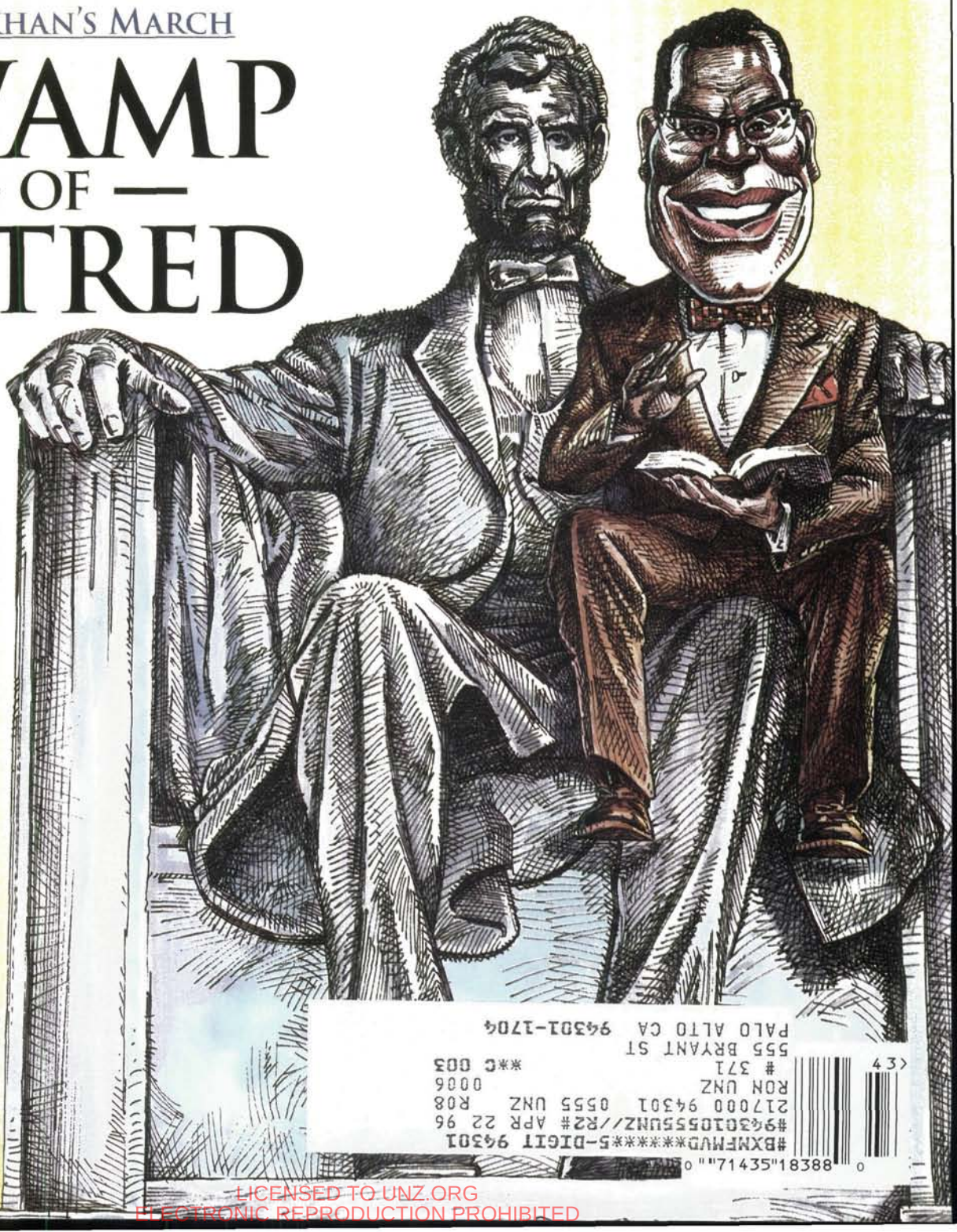
the weekly
Standard

OCTOBER 23, 1995 $2.95

FARRAKHAN'S MARCH

SWAMP — OF — HATRED



POWER GRAB
Matt Labash

THE KIDS
Albert Pyle

A NIGHTMARE
The Editors

HEROES AND VICTIMS
Clarence Thomas

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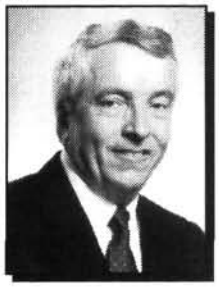
Why Is Telecommunications Reform GOOD For Consumers?

More Choices



"Telecommunications reform will mean real consumer choice in cable, local phone service and long distance."

Jordan Clark
President
United Homeowners Association

Better Services

"For consumers with disabilities, a first priority is access to technology. Telecommunications reform legislation will ensure us that people with all kinds of disabilities will be able to use future information services and equipment."

Deborah Kaplan
Vice President
World Institute on Disability

Lower Prices

"Competition brings down prices. That's why the telecommunications reform bill makes such good sense for seniors."

Marta Sotomayor, Ph.D.
President and CEO
National Hispanic Council on Aging

More Jobs

"The telecommunications reform bill will help make America the world leader in communications technology and create thousands of 21st century jobs."

Daniel A. Ludwig
National Commander
American Legion

With open markets in telecommunications, there'll be one big winner: ***you.***

That's why these groups and many others support the landmark telecommunications legislation that's now before a House-Senate Conference Committee.

Because by opening cable, local phone service and long distance to competition, consumers will have ***more choices, better services*** – even ***lower prices.***

But for this to happen, Congress must first finish the job. The time to pass telecommunications reform is ***now.***

It'll Open Up A Whole New World

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the weekly Standard

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Casual

My Country, Ryder Wrong

As the Ryder Cup unfolded on television a few weeks ago, my thoughts turned naturally to the differences between patriotism and nationalism. Whose didn't?

The Ryder Cup is now the most important event in golf, eclipsing even the Masters and the two Opens, U.S. and British. The Cup is a three-day competition held every other year between the cream of the U.S. players and the cream of the European players.

In intensity, it makes the Final Four, the NBA championship, and the NFC title game (the new Super Bowl) seem as nothing. At the conclusion of this year's play, the European captain, Bernard Gallacher, was moved to remark, "It is almost becoming too much, this Ryder Cup."

In the weeks preceding the Cup, it occurred to me that I was supposed to support the American team. Not only am I an American, I am (yikes!) a registered Republican. The problem was that most of my favorite players, in all the world, were on the European side. Worse, many of my least favorite players were on the American side. It hardly seemed natural to be all rah-rah for the homeboys.

I believe that William F. Buckley, Jr., once wrote, "I am as patriotic as anyone from sea to shining sea, but there isn't a molecule of nationalism in me." I have always felt this way about nationalism, even as a child. (Was I expected to go for some American girl over the winsome Olga Korbut? Not a chance.)

"Nationalism" has an air of chauvinism about it, a thoughtless veneration of "my country, right or wrong"; "patriotism," contrariwise, connotes an enlightened love of country, a rightful appreciation for it. Burke famously said of patriotism that a country, to be loved, ought to be lovely (and a Ryder Cup squad, to be loved, ought to be lovely, as well).

It would have taken a lot to induce me to root against Seve Ballesteros, "the swashbuckling Spaniard" (as it is obligatory to call him in golf writing). He captured me when I was young, and imparted to me a sense of the game's possibilities. (His book, *Natural Golf*, is a holy text.) And how could I have wished defeat on Ian Woosnam, the Wee Welshman, or Bernhard Langer, the "phlegmatic Teuton," or Nick Faldo, the English Colossus? How about Costantino Rocca, an Italian and perhaps the most endearing player in the game?

This latter case is particularly instructive. Rocca is, excuse me, a classic "American" success story, as Algeresque as anyone who ever breathed. Into his mid-twenties, he labored in a plastics factory (barely escaping the permanent deformation of his hands), practicing in the fields after the whistle blew. He is a heroic Everyman: fearless, unlikely, inspiring.

In an instance of perfect symmetry—a happy accident—he was paired in the final round against the American Davis Love III. There is nothing wrong with Love, but he is, in many respects, the anti-Rocca: cool, polished, to the country club born, graced with a textbook swing, the son of one of the most renowned teaching professionals in the world.

Is it not possible to regard Rocca as the more "American" of the two, in the spiritual sense? Is it reasonable, is it moral, to ask someone to pull for a golfer—for anyone—on the basis of birth within common borders?

As the Cup approached its climax, and the U.S. had its back to the wall, something strange occurred. I found myself, against all my protestation and ratiocination, aching, dying, for an American victory. And when the Americans were beaten, I felt aggrieved. I cursed the U.S. team, and felt not the least satisfaction for the jubilant Europeans, my personal favorites among them.

Herewith a little fantasy: I am playing in the Ryder Cup, spangled in stars and stripes, about to win it all for the "U.S.A.! U.S.A.!" (as the crowds chant). When I hole the clinching putt, my teammates sprint from the bank behind the 18th green (for Faldo has taken me to the wire), embrace me wildly, and bear me aloft. (In addition to being the leading money-winner on Tour, I weigh less. This is a fantasy, remember.)

At the closing ceremony, the American flag is raised, and the anthem played. American faces glisten with joyful tears; European ones contort in pain. Surveying this colorful scene, I say inwardly, "Remember, now: You—and your teammates, and the Europeans, and all the world—belong to God. Alone."

So I take care not to mourn the American loss (or is it the loss of those 12 golfers who happen to hold U.S. citizenship?). I strive always to see man as man, not as race, creed, or nationality, and, by the way, can Mrs. Thatcher come over and be president, please?

Jay Nordlinger

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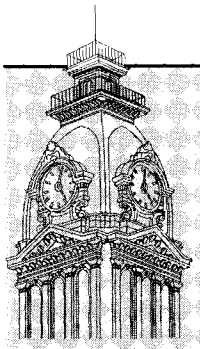

Views From Hillsdale College

The Private Truth About Public Education

Do you recall *The Little Engine That Could*? It's what we used to teach our schoolchildren: "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." The moral emphasizes that positive thinking, hard work, and the courage to succeed are true rewards.

But that moral is absent from many of today's public school classrooms. Instead students are taught that their "self-esteem" matters most. *To insist on literacy is considered coercive and potentially harmful*, warns the left-leaning teachers' union, the National Education Association.

At Hillsdale College's model school, the Hillsdale Academy, we know that genuine self-esteem can come only from achievement. *The Little Engine That Could* was happy precisely because it overcame the odds to reach the top of the hill.

The Hillsdale Academy is pleased to offer the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide*. The *Guide* is an outline of the academic curriculum used by our teachers at the Hillsdale Academy for grades K-8. Based on results from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, these fundamentals work: Our students consistently score in the top ten percentile nationally.

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- **Parents' Handbook**
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And the *Guide* will work with you from the early years of kindergarten through grade eight.

Let's help our children reach the top of the hill. Order your *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide* today.

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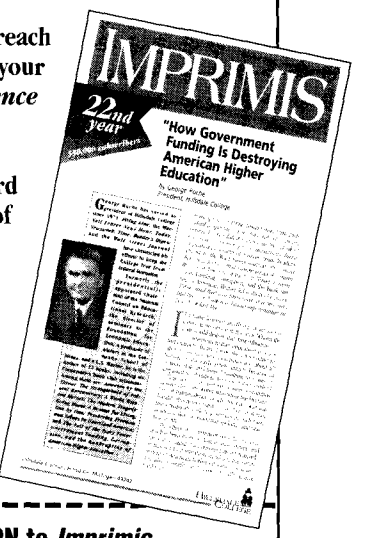

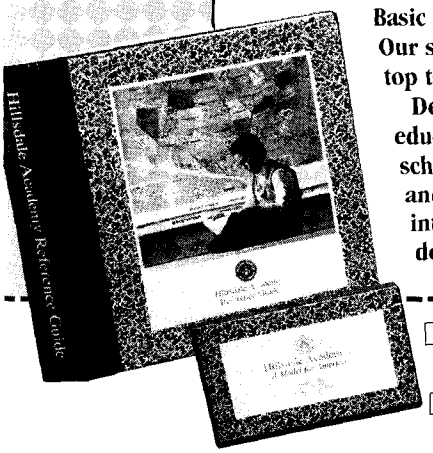

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Flat Tax Rescues Middle Class

Fred Barnes ("Squeeze Play," Oct. 2) suggests that conservatives have ignored the slow wage growth that is squeezing middle-class living standards, and that my flat-tax proposal would exacerbate this problem by raising taxes on the middle class. The flat tax I have introduced would not only lower the tax burden on Americans—including the middle class—it would reverse the slump in wage growth.

Barnes cites Jeff Bell and John Mueller as saying that a flat tax would raise the burden on the middle class. Bell and Mueller are relying on a Clinton Treasury Department analysis which purports to show a tax increase on the middle class under my proposal. The problem is, Treasury didn't analyze my bill. Treasury rewrote my proposal and analyzed its own misrepresentation. For example, Treasury assumes, inexplicably, that my proposal wouldn't tax financial services like banking and insurance, an assumption that artificially shrinks the tax base and skews its distribution analysis.

Treasury also assumes the bill is revenue-neutral, when in fact it provides a $40 billion tax cut financed with spending cuts. And Treasury assumes the tax rate is 23 percent, when my bill calls for a 20 percent rate during the first two years. In any case, these distribution tables are static, highly misleading, and arbitrary, which is why supply-siders have typically put little stock in such zero-sum analysis.

As for the notion that conservatives have ignored the problem of stagnant wages, I want to make clear that I haven't. In fact, my concern about stagnant family wages—more than any other reason—led me to embrace the flat tax. In my view, there is nothing Congress could do that would be more effective in raising the wages and living standards of middle-class Americans than to pass the flat tax.

It's axiomatic in economics that wages increase only when workers become more productive. The single most important factor in making workers productive is equipping them with better machines, so that their output improves and their wages rise. Because the flat tax removes the current bias against saving and investment, it would lead to an investment boom and dramatically higher wages.

Finally, Barnes mentioned Bell's and Mueller's alternative proposal. This would completely eliminate any write-off for purchases of plant and equipment, and thereby dramatically reduce the level of investment, and suppress wages. I haven't heard even the most fervent income redistributors in the Democratic party suggest denying a deduction for the cost of plant and equipment. As for the politics of such an idea, there are few proposals that would generate more united and determined opposition from the small businessmen and women of America.

DICK ARMEY
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
WASHINGTON, DC

Keep Partisanship Alive

If you continue to publish articles like David Brooks's "The Land Beyond" (Oct. 2), your journal will be assured of success for a long time to come. Brooks did a magnificent job of unmasking a perfidious charade being conducted in the mass media.

Building on middle-class American loathing of confrontation, liberal wolves in moderate sheep guises are attempting to impede the tide of conservative sentiment. Brooks was masterful in his exposé.

Partisanship portrayed as good, healthy competition of ideas must be brought to the attention of the public. America has a long tradition of partisan politics, perhaps best exemplified by the Lincoln-Douglas debates. It is strange how we celebrate these events, yet have failed to learn that the ideas emanating from great oratorical battles are the building blocks of our freedom.

IRV SCHNITTMAN
AGOURA HILLS, CA

More Pathetic Lies

I enjoyed Carl Cannon's "Bill's Pathetic Lies" (Oct. 2), but he left out one of my favorites.

Last spring, Clinton proclaimed Loyalty Day by saying, in part: "Our country's rich diversity of peoples and cultures has been called 'the noble experiment.'" Has anyone but Bill Clinton called our melting pot by a term otherwise universally used to describe Prohibition?

The pathetic grasp of American history displayed by Clinton and his "communicators" reminds me of a chestnut from philosopher George Santayana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

PATRICK G. O'MALLEY
ARLINGTON, VA

Just Kidding, Howie

No one else who read my piece on racial friction at the *Washington Post* got the impression that I was angling for a dinner invitation from Kay Graham, as your Scrapbook (Oct. 9) suggests. In fact, my criticisms of my own newspaper as "home to both white and black staffers who believe their opportunities for advancement are limited" was quoted by the *New York Times*. I'm still waiting for Kay to call.

Your magazine is off to a good start. You should be wary of cheapening it with casual cheap shots.

HOWARD KURTZ
WASHINGTON, DC

Throw Bill Out

It is hard to choose among possible characterizations of Byron York's article, "Reelecting Clinton: A Conservative Case" (Oct. 2). Among the more appropriate: feckless and obnoxious.

It is, or ought to be, unnecessary to explain to reasonable people the possibilities for things to go wrong in reelecting the worst president in memory with the expectation that doing so will benefit conservative, i.e. reasonable and modest, voters. But even if one could believe that somehow President Clinton's well-established flaws could be exploited for the benefit of the country, there would still be a duty to take authority away from such an obviously wrong president.

Having shamefully permitted this miserable candidate to be elected, people who care about the well-being of the country have a most serious obligation to throw him out of office.

LAWRENCE O'NEILL
NEW YORK, NY

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Correspondence

Go, Ross, Go!

To your lead editorial ("Stop Perot. Now." Oct. 9), my response is: RELAX. While I agree with your analysis of Perot's thinking and the foolishness of his plan, I think you are overreacting. Perot is not able to "blow up" the Republican party's presidential campaign.

George Bush lost in 1992 not because of Perot's candidacy, but because Bush had no agenda. This is a mistake that the Republican nominee in 1996 will not make, especially given the electoral success of the "Contract with America." If the Republican nominee gives voters something to vote for, then neither Perot nor his patsy will be a factor in the election.

MICHAEL J. AHEARN
ARLINGTON, MA

If I didn't know the political credentials of THE WEEKLY STANDARD, I would have to assume that David Tell is a solid liberal. He used favorite liberal tactics in his editorial. First, declare a crisis and panic. Second, demonize the opposition. Third, trivialize and ridicule the opponent's agenda.

Tell assumes that a Perot third-party candidate will ensure Clinton's re-election. Crisis! What happens if Colin Powell is their candidate? Additionally, Perot had to start organizing a third party now due to state restrictions.

Demonizing is readily apparent from terms like "ragtag United We Stand army," "megalomania," "His selfishness is undisciplined."

Ridiculing the Perot agenda is very weak indeed. Just consider guaranteed health care and retirement, a total ban on lobbying expenditures, campaign-fundraising reform, a balanced budget amendment (still not a Republican reality), and term limits (still not a Republican reality).

Just remember how Perot helped focus on the right issues in 1992.

BUD VAN DEN BROEDER
HOLLYWOOD, FL

Excluding Poor Whites

Elena Neuman's conclusions concerning Harvard's admissions policies ("Harvard's Sins of Admission," Oct. 9) come as no surprise. The key issue involved in the debate concerning affirmative action remains the exclusion of poor whites from the universities' equation of opportunity. Consistently—regardless of merit, skill, or aptitude—poor non-minorities are denied access to many of this country's finer educational institutions. All of the vaunted philosophical underpinnings that support such policies unravel when the issue of poor non-minorities is introduced. Neuman's article hit the nail right on the head.

ALLAN BIKK
JERSEY CITY, NJ

Elis Still Study the West

As a recent and happy product of both the freshman humanities program (Directed Studies) and the upperclass humanities major at Yale, I must protest the implication of Pat Collins's article ("God and Civ at Yale," Oct. 9). The the study of Western Culture at Yale is excellent.

First, the expansion of Directed Studies to 120 freshmen (a tenth of the class) is a good action which recognizes and satisfies the desire of more freshmen to survey the Western tradition in an integrated manner. To complain that not all seminars will be taught by tenured faculty is to acknowledge Yale's higher standards of instruction. At competing institutions, freshmen would not even hope to meet tenured professors. At Yale, study with them is common.

As for Lee Bass's gift, it is regrettable, not "incalculable," to lose $20 million during a $1.5 billion campaign, and President Richard Levin surely deserves some blame. However, one should not deduce from this loss a general antipathy to Western studies. The Bass program, like my major, would have been aimed at only a few students, and would have provided, as the Bass writing program already does, a wonderful but costly opportunity. Collins should get his facts straight.

As I see it, Bass's goals are being realized. While other institutions, such as Stanford, enforce a core curriculum that has been politicized into a multicultural mess, Yale students can, and do, study Western culture undiluted.

JAMES O'NEILL
WASHINGTON, DC

Keep on Rockin'

Having recently visited the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, I found Fred Barnes's swipe hard to understand ("Hot Wax Museum," Oct. 9). He says the museum is "too grand for what's being celebrated inside." True, the museum is big, but it is simple in style.

Barnes complains that rock "isn't very important" musically. One could say the same thing about big band or ragtime music, both of which are simple (compared to, say, a Bach fugue) and appealed to earlier generations of youth. Yet rock has lasted longer and produced more distinct sounds—50s rockabilly, early 60s orchestral, mid-60s Motown—than most forms of popular music. Hence a large museum seems justified.

I had fun and learned some things. I'm sorry Barnes didn't.

MARK ADAMS
WASHINGTON, DC

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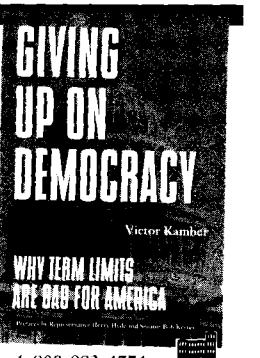

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1. Abolish the personal income tax; replace it with a 10-percent national retail sales tax.

Abolish the personal income tax and replace it with a 10-percent, national retail sales tax. The products and services not subject to that tax include basic rent on housing, non-prepared food, health care, and medicine. The purchase and sale of stocks, bonds, gold bullion or futures contracts, option or warrants will also be exempt. This will immediately reduce the cost of American labor by 25 percent within the U.S. economy. Furthermore a national retail sales tax will end the discrimination against American citizens, requiring all residents and visitors to pay their portion of the federal tax burden. According to the IRS, 17 percent of the economy is underground, contributing nothing toward the overall well being of the nation. Only a sales tax will capture that revenue.

2. Mandate a 15-percent raise.

Stipulate a 15-percent net increase in take-home pay for every wage earner. This will still result in a 10-percent reduction in the cost of American labor relative to current levels, thereby increasing American competitiveness.

3. Increase excise taxes.

A 10-percent increase in excise taxes including the gasoline tax should be implemented. Surveys have shown, after a retail sales tax, gasoline taxes are the best tolerated by the American public.

4. Implement a low, 2-percent national retail sales tax on real estate.

A national sales tax on real estate of two percent should be imposed. This will be split one percent for the buyer and one percent for the seller. This will apply to residential as well as commercial property. This will result in a drastic reduction from the current capital gains tax situation and eliminate the taxation of the elderly who have accumulated their savings in a large part within their home. This will enable the elderly to sell their home once the children have gone and use part of that equity for retirement by reinvesting in a smaller retirement facility. Currently, such persons are forced to borrow against their homes, which is more cost effective than selling their home subject to capital gains tax rules.

5. Flatten business income taxes.

All business operations, whether partnership, proprietorship, or corporation, will be subject to a flat, 15-percent business income tax. The only deductions from the net tax are research & development, charitable contributions, and $1,000 per employee to encourage job creation. Any business earning more than twice expenses (minus director or owner salaries, loans, transfers, dividends, or pension payments) will be subject to a flat, 25-percent income tax.

6. End all taxes on capital gains, gift and inheritance, and savings and dividends.

7. Repeal the 16th Amendment.

The repeal of the federal government's authority to impose an income tax on American citizens as authorized by the 16th Amendment. Based on previous Supreme Court rulings, business and corporations are still subject to income taxes; these changes do not apply to the states.

8. Make any tax increase expire after four years; subject any increase or continuance to a national referendum.

9. Take Social Security off budget.

Social Security must be taken off budget and allowed to become an honest trust fund where the capital contribution will be reinvested. The agency must be segregated, free from lobbying efforts on the part of the private sector as well as the public sector. The guiding principle must be economic security as implied by the name. No funds held by the Social Security system may be diverted in any way whatsoever by Congress, including restraint upon investment of such funds or mandatory investment in Federal government bonds. A maximum of 50 percent of all funds may be invested in either the private sector or government sector. The fund will be allowed to buy listed stocks with a capitalization in excess of $1 billion. Stocks must be U.S.-based operations only. Any bonds (private, state, local, or federal) must not be of an issue rated less than A+, of foreign origin, or of greater maturity than 10 years.

10. Incorporate a tax amnesty.

Phase I of tax reform includes a tax amnesty program. Anyone who has income that has remained unreported and is currently not in negotiation with the IRS, may come forward and pay a flat, 15-percent income tax without penalty or interest. Those funds will be earmarked to allow the independent establishment of the Social Security trust fund. This will provide the seed capital, allowing the new system to be as secure and honest as any private pension plan as prescribed by law.

11. Balance the budget.

A balanced budget target should be the ultimate goal and spending would be subject to mandatory across the board reduction if interest expenditures exceed 15 percent of total government expenditure, exclusive of Social Security.

Summary

The enactment of this proposal will broaden the tax base. It does not shift the tax base from capital and investment to the working middle class. The elimination of income tax and stable, predictable rates will attract offshore capital into the U.S. The net sum of these points will create the single greatest economic expansion in the history of the United States and perhaps the western world.

For more information, contact the Princeton Economic Institute.

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the weekly Standard

Farrakhan's Swamp of Hatred

All good men despise him, but the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan, peerless master of demagoguery's magic arts, has already defeated them. And they do not know it. A week ago Sunday, ABC's Sam Donaldson asked the cleric about President Clinton's reluctance to endorse the Nation of Islam-sponsored "Million Man March." But the purpose of his march is to "organize black men" for self-improvement, community development, job creation, and crime reduction, Farrakhan responded, all crinkly smile and soft voice of wounded innocence. "What intelligent person wouldn't want to embrace that kind of idea?"

He has a point. It's hard to find such an intelligent person just now. Thank you, Minister Farrakhan. Roll credits.

The rhetoric of embarrassment that governs American race relations has already made its half-hearted, half-witted accommodation to Farrakhan's latest, and so far greatest, provocation. The dupes and fanatics who yoke themselves in his Nation's bow-tie uniform will be a small fraction of the massed crowd on the Mall. For almost all the rest of us, left and right, black and white, the consensus judgment on the march is this: message good, messenger—in varying degrees—bad. All we are allowed to disagree about is whether and how thoroughly the latter damages the former. Farrakhan is, after all, the nation's leading anti-Semite. Does it matter?

Sure, it matters. Opponents of the march have the better of this oddly muted debate. There would be no "million men" without Farrakhan, and there would be no Farrakhan without anti-Semitism. At his first Lincoln Memorial appearance, during the August 1983 March on Washington II, Farrakhan departed from his long-established, sordid script to offer unmodulated praise of Martin Luther King, Jr. and to decry "these artificial barriers that divide us as a people" into opposed creeds and races. He was warmly received by the audience. But he was completely ignored by the media.

It was not until the following year that Farrakhan became famous, as an unignorable surrogate speaker in Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign. You remember: He called Judaism a "gutter religion" and issued death threats against *Washington Post* reporter Milton Coleman, who had dared to report Rev. Jackson's "Hymietown" remark, and New York City Clerk David Dinkins, who had dared to criticize *him*. We would never have heard of Farrakhan otherwise. And deprived of that negative celebrity, won by violating basic cultural taboos on a national stage, he would, by his own standards, hardly exist at all. That's what it means to be a demagogue.

The Anti-Defamation League expresses its understandable, necessary concern about "the most mainstream event led by an anti-Semite in recent American history." The ADL also proclaims its confidence that the "vast majority" of march participants will not "subscribe" to Farrakhan's bigotry. That last part is too generous. How many marchers will there be this week who do not know that Farrakhan is a Jew-hater? By responding to his call, by listening to his appeal, by *joining* him, they will be accepting a tacit, charter subscription to anti-Semitism. All of them.

But what if, just for the sake of argument, Farrakhan *weren't* an anti-Semite? ADL spokesmen say they "understand and support" the black-directed goals of the Million Man March. The American Jewish Congress says it supports those goals "enthusiastically." The White House, three days before the March, amended its position to "let's see if we can't build on the positive." Allowing for differences of tone and vigor, that's what *everybody* says. Unmistakably implying in the process that but for the Jew stuff, Farrakhanism is basically harmless.

Shame. America has a nasty, patronizing habit of easily excusing behavior in blacks that would be correctly and stiffly sanctioned in anyone else. Farrakhan's anti-Semitism wounds and infuriates. But it is not by any means the worst thing about him. He poses no serious threat to Jews, or to white Americans

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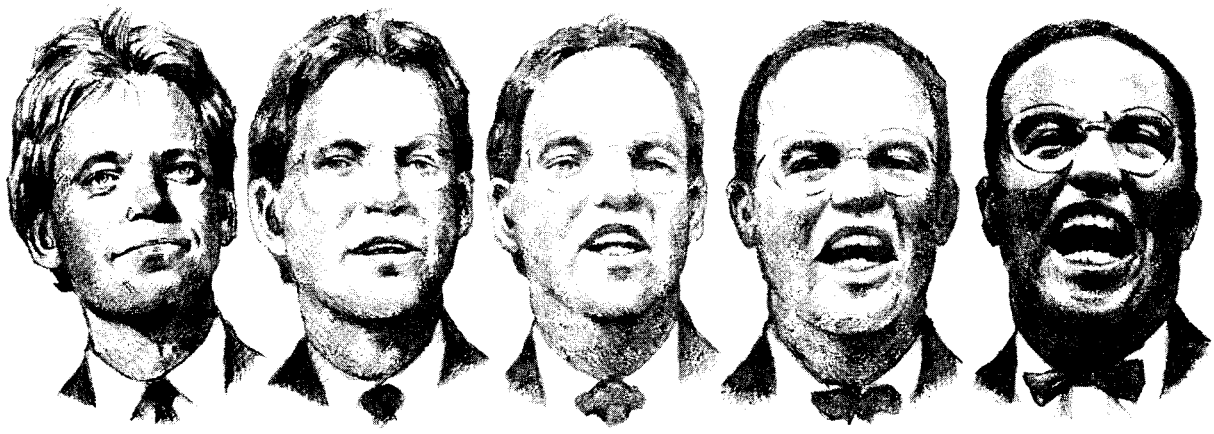
generally. Louis Farrakhan *does* pose a threat, however, a direct and grave one, entirely removed from the question of anti-Semitism, to black Americans. Doesn't *that* matter? Or hasn't anyone noticed?

To begin with, the man is a charlatan of classical proportion. For decades now he has preached a gospel of black economic self-determination, urging his followers to withdraw their commerce from the larger society, to spend and sell only among their own. Forget the stupid theory involved, and consider Farrakhan's practices. With a $5 million interest-free loan from Moammar Gadhafi in 1985, Farrakhan launched something called POWER, Inc., which he promised to turn into a "billion-dollar corporate entity" by 1990. Its retail enterprises would create jobs and investment capital benefiting millions of blacks—if, that is, they each scraped together $20 a month to purchase POWER's first product line, soaps and shampoos.

A comprehensive investigative series earlier this year by William Gaines and David Jackson of the *Chicago Tribune* proves, predictably, that POWER is a fraud. And that Farrakhan, who claims that he "owns nothing," is a thief. Nation of Islam-affiliated companies are saddled with debt, unpaid bills, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax delinquencies. Their assets are personally and directly controlled—in clear violation of federal law—by Nation officials, most of whom are members of Farrakhan's immediate family. POWER pays their heating bills.

And unsuspecting black people, most of them poor, pay for all the rest. Donors to the Nation's "No. 2 Poor Treasury" get a T-shirt. Farrakhan gets the money. His name is on the bank account, which has bought him a 77-acre rural retreat and a Land Rover. He also owns two stately homes in Chicago, a Mercedes, a Lexus, innumerable imported shoes and suits, and God knows what else.

This is not "harmless." And neither is the truest, deepest goal of Farrakhan's march. He—the presumption!—asks black men to "atone" for their crimes to self and family, and to give up their dependence on a corrupt greater America, an ostensibly unobjectionable, even conservative, summons that has muzzled the march's would-be critics. But he is asking these black men to atone as Black Men, not as individuals, for sins he has elsewhere and exhaustively ascribed solely to the conspiracies of White Men. And it is not the subordinate *material* connection that blacks now have to whites that Farrakhan seeks to erase, as his march manifesto makes clear in its complaints against pending federal budget cuts. It is their *psychological* connection with America he wants to sever. He wants black men to withdraw into hatred. And dehumanize themselves.



Louis Farrakhan, the messenger, is appalling. But even had he never once in his life uttered the word Jew, his message—and this march—would be worse still.

Last year at Howard University, Colin Powell told an assembly of students that "African Americans have come too far, and have too far yet to go, to take a detour into the swamp of hatred." There is "danger in the message of hatred," he warned, "however cleverly the message is packaged, or entertainingly it is presented." This year, this month, by contrast, Mr. Powell says through his spokeswoman that while he can't attend the Million Man March (scheduling conflict, you understand), he "supports its purpose."

Its "purpose" is to identify and legitimize a "swamp of hatred" as the proper home for 12 percent of our citizens. Americans—black Americans especially—deserve better than the puling response Farrakhan's march has earned so far.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Illustrations by Sean Delonas

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INCOMPLETE SENTENCE

by Tucker Carlson

EARLIER THIS MONTH, A LITTLE-KNOWN Washington advocacy group called the Sentencing Project released a report with an unassuming title: "Young Black Americans and the Criminal Justice System." The 30-page study began with a simple but disturbing claim: "Almost one in three (32.2 percent) young black men in the age group 20-29 is under criminal justice supervision on any given day—in prison or jail, on probation or parole."

Coming as it did less than 24 hours after the verdict in the O.J. Simpson trial, the report dovetailed perfectly with the countless editorials and news stories being pasted together by frantic editors looking for something to say about race and justice. The next morning, the Sentencing Project's study found its way into nearly every paper and news broadcast in America.

Reaction was swift and almost perfectly uniform. Although many of the key data in the study were rough estimates, hardly anybody seemed to question the Sentencing Project's numbers, or the conclusion it drew from them. At a news conference, Jesse Jackson worked himself into a rhyming frenzy over the news, declaring the government's practice of sending so many black men away a "genocidal formula." "If this were basically white youth in this dilemma or sentenced at this level," Jackson said, "we would assume something is wrong with the system, not something wrong with the children."

Despite the Reverend's fears, virtually no one came out in favor of blaming "the children"—that is, the criminals whose crimes have landed them in state custody. Instead, the System took all the heat. "Many young black men are engaged in drug dealing as a form of moonlighting to supplement low-wage jobs," explained the *New York Times* in an editorial. "They also live in neighborhoods that are targeted for drug arrests." (Memo to crack dealers: location, location, location.) Conservative radio host Armstrong Williams agreed, accusing bigoted cops of singling out black kids, and exhorting his listeners to "change this racist system."

Back at the Sentencing Project's headquarters in a seedy part of downtown Washington, Marc Mauer, the group's assistant director and the primary author of its latest report, appeared pleased with the press coverage. It's been "a terrific response," he said. "We're viewed as a credible source."

Mission accomplished.

Talking with Mauer, or his boss, Project director Malcolm Young, is like going back in time, to a period when experts told us there really was no such thing as a criminal in America, only misguided victims of capitalist oppression. Even the group's offices feel like the Museum of Discredited Ideas, complete with a musty smell and faded clippings espousing failed lefty causes taped to the walls. Mauer himself is the most antiquated of the exhibits.

Mauer is an aging radical straight from Central Casting. The collar of his oxford shirt is soiled; he looks like he hasn't slept in a week. But, true to his role, he doesn't let exhaustion dim his intensity. "Loss of the manufacturing economy," says Mauer, firmly—that's what's behind the crime problem. Never mind that the theory that unemployment causes crime has been debunked by just about every reputable researcher who has considered it. Mauer sticks to the old canard with the doggedness of a flat-earther.

When the subject turns to race, Mauer really gets going. "The general political direction of the country has been moving to the right in recent years," he declares, by way of explaining why so many black men are behind bars, "and I think it's going in a more racist direction, in a direction that says, 'We're not very concerned about people in inner-city areas.'"

It's a theme Mauer has been exploring since his days as a prison-reform worker at the American Friends Service Committee in the mid-1970s. In his newest report, Mauer takes the notion a step further, implying that a racist conspiracy to put more blacks in prison is afoot among lawmakers. Luckily, the Sentencing Project has a solution: "Legislatures should be required," writes Mauer, "to prepare racial/ethnic impact statements for any sentencing policy legislation and to consider any adverse or unanticipated consequences that would affect minorities disproportionately."

And so multiculturalism reaches its inevitable conclusion: race-norming for felons. Imagine the possibilities: Too many blacks getting arrested for car theft? Decriminalize it. Another rapist of color? Sorry, this week's quota has been met.

It may sound kooky, but dozens of state and local governments don't think so. Over the past several years, the Sentencing Project has advised officials in places like New York's Dutchess County and New Jersey's Essex County on issues related to criminal justice. Some of the recommendations the Project has come up with are as dated as the group's ideology.

In a report to administrators in Ulster County, New York, for instance, the Sentencing Project suggests ways to let criminals out of jail early without rousing the suspicions of local judges or the public. "Rather than 'overriding' the judge's initial sentence,"

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counsels the report, "the conditional release process often seems to uncover information that may not have been known or predictable prior to sentencing. For example, a mental disability not identified at sentencing, a new job opening, or a change in the defendant's attitude. . . . Release proposals which highlight these changes may alter the court and community perception" of the need to send an offender to jail.

In another section of the same report, Sentencing Project staffers scoff at the idea of "setting bond to assure the safety of an alleged spouse abuse victim." Instead, they recommend that judges not set bail at all, and find "means other than incarceration for providing community safety." In cases where a criminal absolutely must fork over money to the state, the Sentencing Project endorses a socialist payment plan in which the fine imposed would be "proportional to the ability of an offender to pay."

Who foots the bill for all this "technical assistance"? Officials at the Sentencing Project are curiously touchy about the question. Asked if his organization receives federal funds, Marc Mauer claims it does not. Asked the same question again later, Mauer explodes: "I'm not going to answer your question. I have better things to do than keep talking to you."

In other words, yes. The Sentencing Project has indeed hitched itself to the federal gravy train, though it's obviously considered bad form to admit it. The Project regularly receives grants from the National Institute of Corrections, one of the flabbier arms of the Justice Department.

The most interesting question, however, is not, Where does the Sentencing Project get its money? but, Where did it get its moderate reputation? How does a group like this find itself described in the press simply as a "non-profit organization"?

For the answer, just ask Marc Mauer. Miffed by questions about how the Sentencing Project operates, Mauer responds, "I have a stack of news clippings this high from reporters covering our report, and not a single one of them asked about our funding sources." Or, apparently, about much else. ♦

COUNSELGATE, AGAIN

by Byron York

REMEMBER HUD-GATE? How about Passport-gate? Or Espy-gate? These major and minor scandals, some many years old, all have something in common: They're still costing the taxpayers millions of dollars.

The General Accounting Office has released an audit of independent counsels whose investigations were still underway or whose bills were still being tallied during the period from September 30, 1994, to March 31, 1995. They are Arlin Adams on the HUD scandal; Joseph diGenova on the possibly illicit search of Bill Clinton's passport files at the Bush State Department; Donald Smaltz on the activities of now-deposed Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy; Kenneth Starr and Robert Fiske on Whitewater; and, the granddaddy of them all, Lawrence Walsh on Iran-Contra (yes, Walsh is still spending money).

The numbers are impressive—not surprising, since there is literally no way for any political body in Washington to exercise oversight on an independent counsel's spending once he has been assigned to an investigation. Below is a list of the amounts charged to each counsel's account during the six-month period, followed by the total taxpayer expenditure for each investigation.

The $23 million spent on the HUD investigation is easily the most defensible. Arlin Adams's operation has been by far the most successful of any independent counsel; unlike many investigators, he had the luxury of going after people who had actually committed crimes. Adams, who recently retired and was replaced by Lawrence Thompson, won 16 convictions or guilty pleas, as well as millions of dollars in fines.

Apparently the only matter still left unresolved is the prosecution of former Interior Secretary James Watt, accused of lying to Congress and to a grand jury. That trial is scheduled for January, so look for the final HUD price tag to rise significantly.

But $2.3 million for Passport-gate? Last year diGenova announced he would not

The Gates of Hell

Counsel	*Past 6 months*	*Total*
HUD-gate	$1,253,812	$23,012,187
Passport-gate	335,566	2,340,543
Whitewater	6,879,573	14,672,680
Espy-gate	1,417,259	1,445,150
Iran-Contra	118,477	47,391,940

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"Abortion Rights"... 1995 Style

The House of Representatives will soon consider H.R. 1833, the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. The partial-birth abortion procedure is usually used *after* 20 weeks (4½ months) of pregnancy. At 4½ months, the baby-- as shown by the medical model above-- is about 7 inches long. The procedure is sometimes performed as late as 40 weeks (9 months).

> *The procedure requires a physician to extract a fetus, feet first, from the womb and through the birth canal until all but its head is exposed. Then the tips of surgical scissors are thrust into the base of the fetus' skull, and a suction catheter is inserted through the opening and the brain is removed. (Los Angeles Times,* June 16, 1995, report on House Judiciary hearing)

In 1992, Dr. Martin Haskell, who has performed over 1,000 partial-birth abortions, wrote a detailed technical paper explaining how to perform this procedure. Because of the ensuing controversy, Haskell was the subject of a *tape-recorded* interview with *American Medical News*, the official AMA newspaper, in which he said regarding this procedure:

"In my particular case, probably 20% are for genetic reasons. And the other 80% are purely elective." (*American Medical News* transcript of tape recording)

Registered nurse Brenda Pratt Shafer was "pro-choice" when she was assigned to work at Haskell's clinic. After witnessing close-up the partial-birth abortion procedure, she never went back. Here's how Nurse Shafer described the end of the life of one six-month-old "fetus":

"The baby's body was moving. His little fingers were clasping together. He was kicking his feet. All the while his little head was still stuck inside. Dr. Haskell took a pair of scissors and inserted them into the back of the baby's head. Then he opened the scissors up. Then he stuck the high-powered suction tube into the hole and sucked the baby's brains out. I almost threw up as I watched him do these things."

On September 23, 1995, the Council on Legislation of the American Medical Association voted unanimously to endorse H.R. 1833. (*Congress Daily*, Oct. 10, 1995)

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bring criminal charges against any former Bush administration officials. DiGenova later presented his report to the three-judge panel that appointed him—and then shut down his operation. But the judges have not yet approved the report's release. It is said to be quite lengthy; look for Passport-gate to cost even more when it is finally published, most likely next month.

How about that $14.7 million already for Whitewater? It's the fastest-growing independent counsel bill by far. Making extensive use of the FBI, and operating out of offices in Washington and Little Rock, Starr spent well over $1 million a month during the six-month period audited by the GAO (leftover bills from the Fiske investigation accounted for a small portion of that).

Since the GAO report covers spending only through March 31 of this year, it's likely Starr has now passed the $20 million mark. At that rate, it seems possible the Whitewater total may someday rival that of Iran-Contra; most observers believe Starr's recent request for a delay in further Senate Whitewater hearings was a signal that he has a long way yet to go.

Does it really require $1.4 million to go after Mike Espy? For a while, it looked like Independent Counsel Smaltz would turn into a loose cannon, going far beyond Espy's plane rides and Super Bowl tickets to probe all sorts of Arkansas corruption.

Then, last July, a federal judge decided Smaltz had overstepped his bounds and drew some limits around the Espy probe. Still, Smaltz racked up the second-highest spending during the period audited, and the investigation goes on.

Finally, Lawrence Walsh. Even though his final report was made public in January 1994, and he closed his office in March of that year, the $47.4 million he's spent so far isn't the last of it. The costs of the Iran-Contra investigation are still incomplete, and will remain so for a while.

According to the GAO, the Walsh office may still owe some former staffers retroactive retirement benefits, and Walsh continues to pay unemployment benefits (they accounted for $28,511 of his most recent spending total). "These costs," says the GAO, "may continue in future periods depending upon the former employees' status." So far, Walsh's grand total for Iran-Contra is $47,391,940.

Meanwhile, new investigations are under way. Daniel Pearson, the independent counsel appointed to investigate the business dealings of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, and David Barrett, the counsel investigating HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, were not yet in business during the audit period. But they are now, and are most surely spending lots of money. Look for some dazzling new totals when the next audit is due in March 1996.

Byron York is a writer and television producer in Washington.

Nunn Dares Not Tread

by David Grann

The Democrats' last hope may be a middle-aged mother from the Rust Belt. She is Debbie Stabenow, a 45-year-old career state legislator who traveled last week from her Michigan home to the Democratic National Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to consider a run for Congress. "I've never been afraid to back away from a fight," she says. "I've fought for certain values for 20 years."

But she has come to Washington at a time when the once-potent party of Sam Rayburn and Harry Truman looks more like a gang of George Bush wimps. Just when the party needs them most, Democrats—long the champions of the underdog—have lost their legendary chutzpah.

So with their prize fighters like Sam Nunn and Bill Bradley slinking off to retirement homes, Stabenow isn't sure the battle is worth it. Not if it means being trapped eternally in the minority. "I haven't made up my mind yet," she says.

Yet for six hours she listened, along with 70 other potential candidates, to Democratic recruiters cajole and counsel her, including a special plea from House minority leader Richard Gephardt. "We need you," he said, becoming flushed and pounding his fist against the podium. "This is the group that will take the people's House back in '96. Winning this election is about more than politics. It's about saving the country. That much is at stake."

It's easy to understand why Gephardt sounds so desperate. Just 24 hours earlier, Rep. Norman Mineta of California packed up his bags in mid-session and split for a job in the private sector, while Rep. Harry Johnston from Florida announced he was calling it quits at the end of the term.

"Right now conservative Democrats only have two choices: switch parties or retire," says Rep. Mike Parker, who is considering the former. But, as Stabenow

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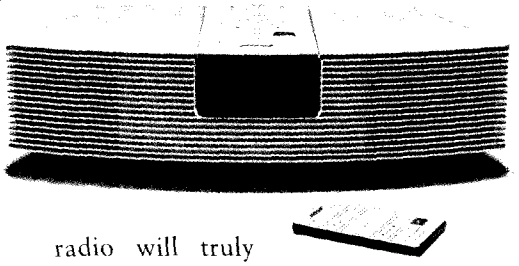

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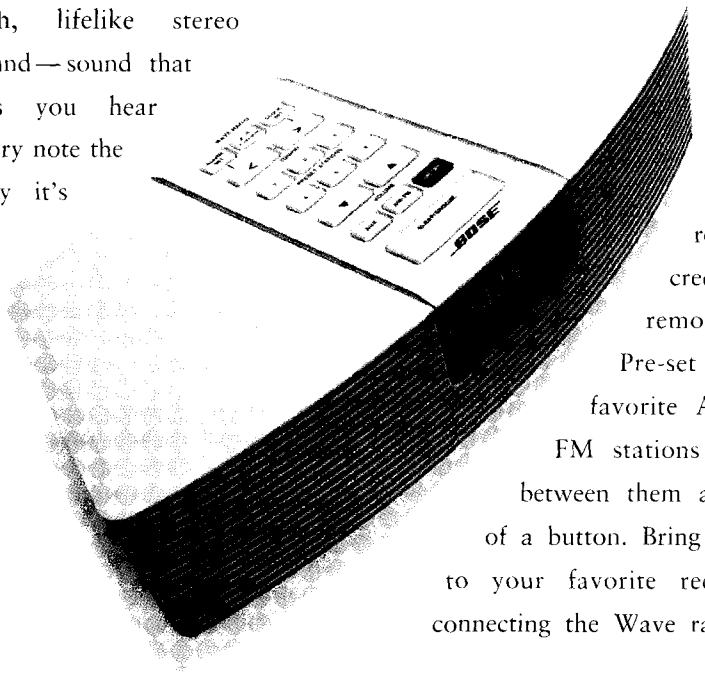

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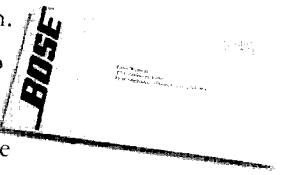

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notes, there's a third choice: Stay and fight. "It's not fun being in the minority," Stabenow says, having experienced it in the Michigan legislature. "And a lot of people just can't take it."

Indeed, in the Senate, Nunn, the highly regarded ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, said he'd rather go home than return in 1996. He is the unprecedented eighth Democratic senator to announce his retirement in a single session; two more—Sens. Richard Shelby and Ben Nighthorse Campbell—have switched parties. And Republicans, having seized the Capitol, may be about to dig a moat: a 60-seat, filibuster-proof majority in the Senate in 1996.

On the House side, the numbers are equally grim: Though only five Democrats have said they will retire so far, three others have found their inner Republican souls, one has resigned mid-session and another has gone to jail.

Some departures, like Rep. Sonny Montgomery's, were expected. He is 75. But others seem to be a product of Democratic blues, and a kind of sanctimonious passivity. Bradley decried the state of American politics. "On a basic level, politics is broken," he said. "Neither party speaks to people where they live their lives. Both have moved away from my own concept of service and my own vision of what America can be."

Nunn echoed: "The ability to raise big money and buy saturation television ads has become the dominant theme of our political races." And Sen. Paul Simon groaned: "Politics today are unnecessarily ugly."

Sounds good, even stirring, except for one thing: Politics has always been ugly. In 1856, Democrat Rep. Preston Brooks beat Sen. Charles Sumner with a cane in the Senate chamber. In 1902, two Democratic senators punched each other in the face over their "honor." And in 1964, then-Democratic Sen. Strom Thurmond wrestled down Democratic Sen. Ralph Yarborough outside the Senate Caucus Room and made him cry uncle. "If you didn't see manifestations of ugliness, you'd wonder what was wrong," says Senate historian Richard A. Baker.

And if the future of the country is really at stake, as all the Democrats contend, where have all its defenders gone? The party, facing the prospective end of its cherished New Deal and Great Society, has lost something much more critical than vision: guts.

That's why the image of the 75-year-old Rep. Sam Gibbons yanking on Republicans' ties, throwing paper balls, and exploding on the House floor is so stirring for Democrats. "We call it the 'Normandy instinct," says Rich Davis, a former press secretary for Gibbons. "It's the same instinct that led him as a 24-year-old to parachute into darkness while German soldiers were firing at him."

Sam Nunn

Yet with few exceptions, no Democrats are plummeting into the darkness. Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a conservative Democrat, says he implored Nunn and Bradley to stay in the trenches. Gephardt cornered senior Democrats, begging them to keep fighting. And President Clinton called and pleaded with Mineta, who was offered a lucrative job with a defense contractor. All to no avail.

Mineta took the money and ran, saying, "after 20 years, frankly, I have nothing to show for this." In an interview with *The Hill* newspaper, he said even his family was surprised at his sudden exit. "My kids said, 'Gee, Dad, we thought you'd go out feet first.'"

Instead, as Republican party chairman Haley Barbour has noted: "Democrats have voted with their feet." As a result, the party has lost its best and brightest—Mineta, a former chairman of the Public Works and Transportation Committee; Nunn, a defense expert; Sen. Paul Simon, an ardent Great Society liberal; and Bradley, a former Rhodes Scholar and intellectual voice of moderation.

Call it a Democratic brain drain. And with so many departures, some party faithful have tried to find a certain nobility in the exodus, as if they were Jews crossing the desert. "The bottom line is that Gingrich's style of politics won't benefit the country," says

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Rep. Gene Taylor, a Mississippi Democrat. "We won't tear things down just to prevail. People like Nunn and Bradley and Montgomery are too dignified for that."

Perhaps. Democrats may have even discovered a newfound nobility in the minority. The problem is that only an old-fashioned political brawl will save the Democratic party from imminent death.

With Democrats like Nunn and Bradley heading for the hills, only people like Stabenow may be left to resist the Republican revolution. "I'll have to make up my mind soon," she says. For the Democrats' sake, she'd better.

***David Grann is executive editor of** The Hill.*

Frisco Edges Rightward

by Debra J. Saunders

San Francisco's "pre-election symposium" on Oct. 9—not a debate, please, that's too tacky—was everything you might have expected: politically correct, unapologetically liberal, and occasionally bizarre. The incumbent sheriff told the crowd that one reason he should be re-elected was the great organic gardening program he had put together for inmates. All three candidates for district attorney argued about who had most vociferously opposed California's three-strikes-you're-out measure. The incumbent D.A. was faulted for adhering to the three-strikes law, to which he pled guilty, but reminded voters he had opposed it when it was on the ballot.

But if you think that San Francisco's highly competitive mayoral race is just one long exercise in unabashed and kooky liberalism, think again. No controversies here about who would do more to end genital mutilation in the Third World; these days, candidates only whisper about tax hikes and are shy about bringing up even those proposals that might entail teensy little park fees or hotel excises. California's notorious former assembly honcho, Willie Brown, recently delivered a tough crime speech in which he explained how he would bear down on drug dealers in the city's neighborhoods. This race is about law and order and getting more government for the buck—just like any normal city. Astonishing.

Still, this is not Contract with America-ville. There is a Republican candidate, but his grasp of English is so tenuous that he told a neighborhood group if he were mayor, "Rolls will head." San Francisco remains Democratic, but the Democrats here seem to be maturing a little. Roberta Achtenberg, whose appointment to Clinton's HUD made her America's most famous lesbian politician, mentioned sexual preference only *once* during the symposium. Instead she focused on neighborhood task forces, restructuring government, and "strands of community policing."

The candidacy of County Supervisor Angela Alioto, daughter of the erstwhile mayor Joe Alioto, hasn't been helped by the April conviction of her former boyfriend Peter Rowland, who pleaded guilty to defrauding two women in a real-estate con. Alioto has contended Rowland's conviction shouldn't hurt her prospects "because," she explained to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "I think every woman in the world can relate to having met a jerk." It has been reported that Alioto is dropping out of the race. If so, the nearly nightly candidates' forums will be much duller.

Incumbent mayor Frank Jordan, a moderate Democrat whom city pundits have curiously dubbed a conservative, is struggling. Polls indicate that on November 7, Jordan and Brown will be the top two vote getters. Since neither is expected to get 50 percent of the vote, that means the two would face each other in a December run-off.

People who only know Willie Brown from press clips about his strong-arm tactics in the California assembly assume he is far to America's left. In truth, Brown more closely resembles a quintessential businessman's candidate. He boasts about his Brioni suits. He has enjoyed tax write-offs for his many cars because he claims to be a "collector." Before he announced, Brown informed the public he wasn't sure if he would run because he didn't think he could live on the mayor's salary of $138,669—and the city's charter prevents him from taking some of those lucrative side jobs that kept him in cars during the assembly years.

Downtown businessmen, some of whom already maxed out in contributions to Jordan, are flocking to Brown's camp with donations in hand. Charles Schwab, Safeway chairman of the board Peter Magowan, the Gap's Donald Fisher, and restaurateur Wolfgang Puck are on his donor list. No surprise there—Brown has represented a number of city bigwigs in his other job of lawyer and corporate lobbyist to the city. And downtown knows that Brown understands that a deal is a deal.

Still, his candidacy has experienced some unexpected snags. Having received more than $800,000

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from gambling-related interests since 1987, Brown suggested allowing a casino to be built on Treasure Island so that the city could benefit from the tax revenues.

Not to worry; the upscale Brown assured voters he would not allow the city's tony image to be sullied by rooms full of polyestered retirees glued to the slots. No, his would be a "Monte Carlo-style upscale casino." In fact, he suggested the casino should have a dress code—although in the wake of charges that he was being *tres* elitist, he conceded that formal dress would not be required. "I don't think we can do tuxedoes," he later explained. "But we can do jackets."

A former police chief from the community-relations school, Frank Jordan can't possibly compete with Brown on style, connections, or resume. Since he stunned the cognoscenti by winning the election four years ago, Jordan's biggest problem has been the constant sniping and stonewalling he has had to endure from City Hall's liberal establishment. For example, when Jordan proposed that the city's welfare agency automatically deduct discounted housing vouchers from the checks of homeless recipients—thereby ensuring that they would stay in single-room occupancy hotels instead of sleeping in shelters or on street corners—the county supervisors opposed him. Jordan was forced to put the measure on the ballot for approval. And he won.

The Jordan camp has two things going for it: Brown's record and the homeless issue. When Brown boasted that he would increase drug arrests in the neighborhoods, for example, the Jordan campaign pounced: Local reporters were reminded that in 1981 while he was speaker, Brown represented a Colombian drug-cartel figure. After Brown convinced a federal judge to reduce his client's bail from $10 million to $1 million, the client disappeared, presumably having fled the country.

Jordan's predecessor, Art Agnos, had a philosophy about dealing with the homeless that Jordan's challengers share. Agnos believed that law enforcement should not be used to deal with the homeless until a vast array of social services were fully operational. As a result, an army of bums set up camp in the city's Civic Center, which was scornfully dubbed "Camp Agnos."

For his part, Jordan has ordered law enforcement to arrest street people who urinate or defecate in public, sell or use drugs on the street, are publicly intoxicated or sleeping on streets and in public parks. The program is called "Matrix." While city leftists have howled that Matrix criminalizes poverty, on many Matrix forays police are accompanied by social workers who attempt to refer the displaced to shelters or other services. And city workers can walk through the Civic Center again.

Brown, Alioto, and Achtenberg have been highly critical of Matrix. Alioto insists that if people want to camp out, the police should not move them. Brown recently told the *San Francisco Chronicle* editorial board that if he were mayor, shelters would not be able to turn away clients due to drunkenness. He proposes building more shelters.

The opposition's discredited, sentimental view of the homeless may be what re-elects Frank Jordan, who is well aware of the anger residents feel about the city's past coddling. Jordan has wisely figured out that in a city that prides itself for being cosmopolitan, he can't compete with Brown on style, urbanity, or wit. He is a button-down guy who stands out because his philosophy on the homeless doesn't tie the hands of city police. Jordan's campaign slogan? The echoes of a famous TV cop show are all to the point: "For the Streets of San Francisco."

***Debra J. Saunders writes a column for the** San Francisco Chronicle.*

The Peace Powers Act

by Fred Barnes

President Clinton ought to be deliriously happy about the Republican response to his plan for deploying as many as 25,000 soldiers in Bosnia as peacekeepers.

True, three (Steve Forbes, Bob Dornan, Morry Taylor) of the 10 GOP presidential candidates declared their opposition on the WMUR-TV debate in New Hampshire on October 11. And at least two more (Phil Gramm, Pat Buchanan) are sure to be opposed.

But the president's first meeting with Republican congressional leaders—Democratic leaders were there, too—on September 26 went swimmingly. "This is the first time we'd been consulted in a real way," Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole said later. House Speaker Newt Gingrich said at the end of the two-hour session across the street from the White House that it was the best meeting he'd ever had with Clinton. (George Stephanopoulos, the president's aide, immediately leaked Gingrich's accolade to the *Washington Post*.)

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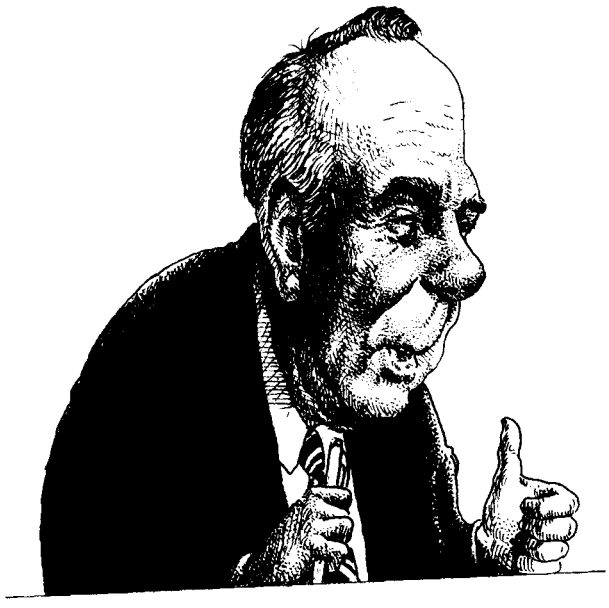
Unless the administration embarrasses itself at congressional hearings in mid-October, it's not likely enough Republican opposition will develop to block the deployment.

Both Dole and Gingrich are inclined to back the president, though they're not on board yet. It's not because they have bought the current White House line, vigorously pitched to the media, that the president has matured into a deft foreign policy leader. Rather, they are internationalists who have often endorsed the president's prerogatives in foreign affairs. So when Clinton argued at the September meeting that he has the right to deploy troops without seeking congressional approval, neither Dole nor Gingrich (or anyone else) challenged him.

Of the two, Gingrich will be the easier for Clinton to enlist. "Newt's inclination was to commit on the spot," a GOP colleague said. But he held off until after House hearings. Tony Blankley, Gingrich's press secretary, said they will be "friendly hearings."



Bob Dole

Dole gave Clinton a harder time at the meeting. He noted waspishly that while Clinton wants bipartisan support now, Democratic leaders had refused to give that to President Bush in 1991 when he sought congressional approval for Desert Storm against Iraq.

"Many Democrats voted for it," interjected Vice President Al Gore. (Gore was one of 10 Democratic senators to back Bush.) Dole was especially irritated to see Democratic Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts jump on Clinton's bandwagon, since Kerry had rarely backed George Bush or Ronald Reagan. "I hope [Republican Governor] Bill Weld runs" against Kerry for the Senate next year, Dole commented later.

"I don't want to be like the Democratic leaders in the Gulf crisis," Dole told Clinton. "But I don't think you've made your case to the American people. There are three basic questions we have to answer. How many? How long? How much? How many troops are you going to send? How long are they going to be there? And how much is it going to cost?" Clinton didn't offer answers at the meeting.

Dole expressed concern when administration officials described American soldiers as "peace enforcers" instead of "peacekeepers."

"That means you're going over there knowing you're probably going to do something that endangers somebody's life," he said afterwards. "That's a ratchet up." Dole also told Clinton that if he lifted the arms embargo, "you wouldn't have to send any American troops. The Bosnians could defend themselves." Again, Clinton was silent.

The Senate hearings may not be friendly. When Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Defense Secretary William Perry, and Gen. John Shalikashvili, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, they'll be confronted by a committed, vociferous opponent of dispatching American forces to Bosnia, Chairman Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

And when they appear before the Senate Armed Services Committee, they'll face another, John McCain of Arizona, a strong voice in Republican policymaking on foreign affairs.Helms's problem is with the peace settlement itself. He's opposed to partitioning Bosnia into Muslim, Serb and Croat sections, which the American-negotiated peace plan would, in effect, do. "Bosnia becomes Lebanon writ large," a Helms aide said.

The senator is also skeptical of the Clinton plan to bring Russian troops into the NATO force that polices the peace agreement. McCain is dubious whether the Serbs, Bosnians, and Croats are truly set on peace or whether they're just taking a break for the winter. Next spring, he said, American troops may be "caught in a crossfire."

Should the administration make its case effectively at the hearings, McCain insists, opponents of the troop deployment will be thwarted. Republicans won't want to risk being blamed for causing the peace accord in Bosnia to crumble in the absence of American troops. "Fear of taking responsibility has always been a very big factor around here," McCain says. Even Bob Dole isn't immune. ♦

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Coats of Many Colors

by David Brooks

The Republican Party may not be as libertarian as it seemed a few months ago. Just after the November election, sweeping anti-government rhetoric was the order of the day, and controversial libertarian ideas went unchallenged. Among these was the idea that if government would just get out of the way, America could solve its problems. Newt Gingrich said last winter that the worst thing the new Congress could do was to replace social engineering of the left with social engineering of the right.

The Oklahoma City bombing cooled the anti-government rhetoric, and now, six months later, many conservatives are saying it's not enough for government simply to withdraw. Sen. Dan Coats of Indiana has introduced a package of 18 bills, collectively called the "Project for American Renewal," that represent the most ambitious attempt to use government power to pursue conservative ends. The big provision is a $500 tax credit ($1,000 for couples) for donations to charities doing poverty-related work.

Dan Coats

Other measures are unapologetically activist. One would encourage states to implement waiting periods and counseling for couples intending to divorce. Another would provide $50 million in vouchers that pregnant women could use at private or religious group homes. There would be grants to encourage school districts to set up single sex schools. One bill would require that every federal dollar spent on family planning be matched by another dollar spent on abstinence education and adoption services.

Together the bills involve the federal government in the intimate details of life—sex, divorce, maternity. Coats enlisted William Bennett to help present the package, and at the unveiling on September 6, Bennett declared, "If the liberal fallacy is an abiding faith in the all-sufficiency of government, the conservative fallacy could easily become an abiding faith in the all-sufficiency of non-government."

At root, this is an argument about the underclass and its persistence, generation after generation. The libertarians argue that the perverse economic incentives of the welfare state reward illegitimacy and joblessness. Coats and others argue that the underclass is by now a byproduct of cultural decay. They maintain, as Charles Krauthammer does in the current *Public Interest*, that social disintegration is not a reversible chemical reaction. Bad social policies may pollute communities, but you can't just drain off the policies and expect the communities to thrive.

Coats notes that the current GOP welfare reforms force people to sink or swim, and that government has to do something for the people who, especially in the short term, are going to sink. The so-called "mediating institutions"—charities, churches, families—can, with government assistance, help fill the void.

He's edging toward a government that takes sides, that tries to use political power to influence cultural attitudes. "Government should not be libertarian or neutral. Public policy ought to favor the time-honored institutions—family, community, private charity," he says. It's hardly a mad rush towards theocracy. The tax credit could be used to fund anti-poverty work sponsored by the Baptists, Scientologists, or the American Council of Nymphomaniacs.

This conservative vs. conservative disagreement will really get interesting when the Coatsian impulse to use government to fortify institutions meets the flat tax. The flat tax is based on the idea of stripping tax incentives from the code and leaving the government strictly neutral about how people spend their money.

It's already clear that there is little support for the pure libertarian-neutralist position—"stay flat or die," as its chief supporter, House Majority Leader Dick Armey, puts it. Freshman Rep. Mark Souder, a former

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Coats aide who supports limited social engineering of the right, is promoting a flat-tax proposal that encourages home ownership and charitable giving. "Anybody who is flexible and who has to get elected in today's system, who doesn't have his district nailed down the way Armey does, is going to be flexible on this," he says. But a balance will have to be struck between those who want to minimize the government's influence, on the one hand, and those who generally want to reduce government but also want to use it in limited ways to influence the culture.

This balance will be influenced by two strains of conservative thought. The free market strain has long demonstrated that when government tries to influence private decisions, the effects are usually perverse. But the hottest conservative theory right now centers around the idea of restoring the "civil society," an America guided by institutions that are neither market-based nor government-run. Different parts of the Coats package have been endorsed by leaders of this strain: David Blankenhorn, Diane Ravitch, Marvin Olasky, Father Robert Sirico, and Bennett.

The balance will also be influenced by pure politics. America is not a libertarian country. When problems arise, people look to government. Democrats respond to these cries with big programs (national health insurance), and Republicans respond by adjusting the tax code (medical savings accounts). In the heat of an issue frenzy, Republicans will probably opt for activist measures that they might frown on in their cooler flat-tax moments.

Coats has won some nice praise from liberals such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan for his Project for American Renewal. But this is really a debate within conservatism. And the struggle between the free market and the civil society is not so much a struggle between conservative factions. It's a friction that most conservatives feel within themselves. ♦

Tax Cuts: The Senate Stalls

by Matthew Rees

Senate Republicans, never particularly unified, can't make up their minds about the size, shape, and timing of tax cuts this year. They considered a scheme to make some of the cuts temporary, quickly abandoned the idea, then on October 12 decided to look at the scheme again. No Republican is in more disarray than Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole. Asked whether the full $245 billion tax cut would be reached, Dole said on the Oct. 1 *Face the Nation*: "I'm not certain at this point." Two weeks later he's still uncertain.

Dole's confusion is worrying and angering Republican tax-cutters. House Speaker Newt Gingrich insists the $245 billion is sacrosanct. Sen. Phil Gramm, Dole's presidential rival, is trying to jump-start his campaign with it: during a debate on Oct. 11 in New Hampshire, he vowed he wouldn't "cut deals" with Democrats—implicitly accusing Dole of getting ready to do just that. Dole is back on the $245 billion bandwagon, and the new chairman of the Finance Committee, Sen. Bill Roth of Delaware, is working as his lieutenant. "What we're trying to do," Roth has said, "is not just pass a tax cut; we're trying to create more economic growth, jobs, and opportunity."

But both Dole and Roth have to cope with the fact that some Senate Republicans want to trim the size of the tax cut, or even scrap it altogether.

Such a move would be a political blunder of the first order, blurring a primary distinction between Republicans and Democrats that works to Republicans' advantage. Of course, short term calculations make it seem otherwise. Public opinion polls show that when presented with the option of balancing the budget or cutting taxes, budget balancing wins. In a September NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll, 37 percent said the most important issue for Congress to address is a balanced budget. Only 13 percent said tax cuts. Even political consultants such as Frank Luntz, who advises Gingrich, are preaching this message.

There's one big problem with picking a balanced budget over tax cuts: It's a false choice. The public wants both. Besides, tax cuts are likely to spur the economy, and thus produce more tax revenue to reduce the budget deficit. Republicans would be foolhardy to ignore the fact that while there are many deficit hawks in America, there are millions more people who believe their taxes are excessive. When Gallup asked people in December if they thought their taxes were "too high" or "about right," 66 percent said "too high," the strongest response to that question since December 1969. More recently, when pollster Ed Goeas asked if Republicans should stick with plans to cut taxes, 54 percent said yes and only 32 percent said no. The most revealing finding, however, comes from a September *Los Angeles Times* poll in which 62 percent supported smaller government with fewer ser-

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vices, 27 percent larger government with more services.

All these poll results underscore the message of last year's House and Senate victories: a desire for less government through spending reductions *and* tax cuts. Delivering the tax cuts is the hard part. Dole has delayed a Finance Committee vote on tax cut legislation until he's confident he has the votes of the 11 Republicans, since all nine Democrats are expected to oppose the bill. Meanwhile, GOP defectors are waiting in the wings. Gramm, who replaced Bob Packwood on the committee, promised that he is "not going to vote for any reconciliation bill that does not have the full $245 billion tax cut."

Among GOP moderates, there are at least five senators who want a pared-down tax cut as a way of getting more deficit reduction. Frank Murkowski of Alaska, for example, wants to take the $170 billion in savings from balancing the budget by 2002 and use it to pay off the national debt.

Making the issue even cloudier is the Finance Committee's version of the tax cut legislation. An Oct. 10 draft contained a temporary child tax credit for families with incomes below $110,000 and replaced the current $2,350 dependent exemption with a $500 tax credit. The net effect of this proposal would have been to raise taxes for millions of families once the tax credit expired in 1998.

William Roth

The Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council, two key GOP constituencies, were furious when they learned of this the following day, and Dole's staff dumped it almost immediately. Whatever happens, Republicans should be concerned: In a recent Times Mirror poll, they trailed President Clinton by nine percentage points on who has a better plan for middle-class tax relief.

Making matters worse, Republicans have also been spooked by the Democratic mantra that they are cutting Medicare by $270 billion to finance a $245 billion tax cut for "the rich." President Clinton embraced this theme in an Oct. 7 radio address, arguing that Republicans were actually *raising* taxes by $148 billion. Sen. Robert Bennett, a conservative Republican from Utah, conceded to me that the "perception of linkage between the Medicare savings and the tax cut is creating enough of a stir in the polls that some senators are saying 'let's delay the tax cut.'"

Lacking a convincing rebuttal, GOP Sens. Larry Craig of Idaho and Spence Abraham of Michigan proposed a $177.2 billion four-year tax cut package, designed to include House tax cut provisions that would have been squeezed out in a seven-year, $245 billion package.

This was abandoned, however, when it looked like waffling (Gramm called it "one of the worst ideas I have heard"), only to be favorably received by some House members at the Oct. 12 House-Senate leadership meeting. This prompted senators to reconsider the Craig-Abraham plan, now transformed into a $244.5 billion tax cut over five years—not much of a savings there.

Amidst the disarray, a few GOP senators, Rod Grams of Minnesota and Connie Mack of Florida, have gone on the offensive, making the economic case for tax cuts. But many others are on the defensive. "It is distressing to me that increasingly Republicans believe George Mitchell's interpretation of the 1980s," laments Bennett.

That interpretation holds that President Reagan's tax cuts produced the mammoth deficits. And the lesson from it is that tax cuts shouldn't be considered until the deficit is restrained. But there's a catch that Mitchell never spelled out; namely, that a party that puts off popular tax cuts while trying to narrow the deficit by spending cuts will soon be voted out. That's what happened to Democrats in 1994 after they did only the first part, raising taxes. If they're not resolute on cutting taxes now, it could happen to Republicans in 1996. ♦

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THE STANDARD QUESTION: Everybody knows Colin Powell is a popular guy. But how strong is he as a presidential candidate when matched one-on-one against the Republican party's top sluggers, Bob Dole and Phil Gramm? Ed Goeas of the Tarrance Group found out for us. In a national survey in early October, Goeas asked Republican primary voters to make a choice: If the race came down to Powell vs. Dole, whom would they prefer? Dole prevailed, 50 percent to 39 percent—not much of a margin for the "front-runner" against an unannounced candidate. But the startling result Goeas found was when he matched Powell against Gramm. The result: Powell 60, Gramm 28. Sobering news for Gramm, who has been running second, if a distant second, to Dole throughout the year.

All this is striking news to those who have always assumed that a conservative like Gramm would beat a moderate like Powell among the supposedly red-meat, angry-white-male Republican faithful. No way of saying how the dynamics of an actual campaign would play out, but numbers like these will keep the Powell boomlet alive and well for the next while.

♦

CLINTON FAMILY VALUES: In a seedy attempt to sully the Clinton's pro-family credentials, the *Manchester Guardian* announced in a recent headline: "Clintons Are Playing The Family Card." The article suggested that the First Couple's use of Dan Quayle-like terminology during the Beijing maelstrom was an eelish ploy to ward off conservative critics. Not fair! The Clinton administration has always been strong on this issue. After all, many of its alumni have staked their careers on it.

Like recently resigned Abner Mikva for one, who left not because of the perpetual litigious morass that is this White House Counsel's office, but because he wanted to spend *more time with his family*. Ditto his predecessor Lloyd Cutler, who set a self-imposed time limit before accepting the job because he couldn't wait to get back to his "young, peppy wife," sexagenarian Polly Kraft. When former chief lobbyist Howard Paster and deputy chief of staff Roy Neel had their turf sprayed by bigger dogs, they checked out altogether, claiming they weren't getting enough family time.

"I'm going to be Mr. Mom for a while, go to PTA meetings and pack lunches," said Neel, before quadrupling his salary along with Paster in the private sector. "I am looking so forward to becoming irrelevant." Paul Begala knows something about that, too, in his new incarnation as professor and columnist for *George*. But did Begala leave his unofficial White House post because he talked too much or alienated Leon Panetta? Pshaw. Said Begala: "I want to be a better father."

♦

NEW HAMPSHIRE HIJINKS: That was some debate they had up there in Concord, N.H., last week on television station WMUR. Actually, it wasn't a debate. It was a forum. Actually, it wasn't a forum; it was a chance for WMUR political reporter Carl Cameron to watch as the candidates kowtowed before him. And it resembled nothing so much as a bad cable-access show. During Gov. Steve Merrill's opening peroration, the lights went out. Later, during Bob Dole's portion, the sound went out. And throughout, the viewers went out—of the room, or changed the channel. CNN reported a horrifyingly low rating for the spectacle.

But most interesting was the disappearing act Dole pulled during Phil Gramm's exchange with Cameron. For those few minutes, the majority leader simply vanished from the stage.

Why? Because he feared Gramm was going to turn and ask him, point-blank and on camera, to take a pledge—a letter that would commit him to $245 billion in tax cuts. And you know how well Dole does with pledges in New Hampshire. If those few people who were still watching CNN didn't notice Dole's absence, that was due to some clever advance work by Dole's staff: His handlers had already extracted a promise from WMUR that the camera was not to pan the faces of the other candidates while any of them was talking.

♦

LIGHT UP, BRIGHT AND DANGEROUS OBJECT: Janos Starker, the great Hungarian cellist, struck a memorable blow for a precious freedom now under assault—smoking. Last year, he traveled to Columbia, S.C., to conduct a master class at the university there and play the Elgar Concerto with the South Carolina Philharmonic. Because the concert hall is a "smoke-free" building, the brass informed him that he would not be permitted to smoke, even in his private dressing room. Starker, taken aback, appealed for reconsideration, requesting that he be notified as to the final decision as soon as possible, even if it was in the middle of rehearsal. Indeed, it was during rehearsal that he was summoned backstage: No, he would not be allowed to smoke, even in his private room; regulations forbade. The cellist returned to the stage, and addressed the orchestra, saying roughly this: "I have lived through fascism; I have lived through

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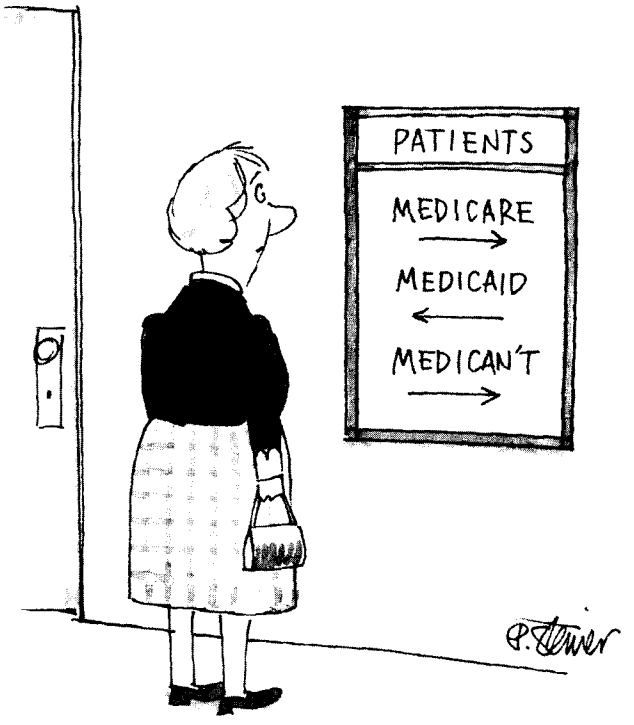

communism. But I cannot abide the petty tyranny into which this country is falling, and neither should you." With that, he collected his instrument, packed, and left town. There was a pall for a minute or two. Then a clarinetist began to play "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes."

♦

WHAT WOULD COLORADO SAY?: "You know you're absolutely gonna be gay when . . . your third-grade teacher asks you for decorating tips."

"You know you're gay when . . . a big bearded two-stepper makes you feel like Patsy Cline at the junior prom."

"You know you're gay when . . . you'd gladly trade in all your Louis Vuitton to play Norma Desmond."

Surely these cracks, these grotesque caricatures, these outrageous defamations of the good name of gays everywhere are the work of some raging homophobe, someone deserving of a picket, an ACT-UP demonstration, a rumored outing. Sorry—they come from a bizarre little book especially written and designed to serve as a stocking stuffer for the homosexual male in your life. *You Know You're Gay When . . .* , published by Contemporary Books, is part of the new gay publishing craze. And its release indicates one thing: When it comes to jokes about limp wrists, interior decoration, Broadway musicals, and Garland *mère et fille* (*nom*: Minnelli), Pat Buchanan could say nothing more stereotypical about homosexuals than the gay community itself.

♦

THE READING LIST: Since we are supposed to say that the ostensible goals of the Million Man March are laudable, here are some books the marchers might want to read if they genuinely wish to assert and accept their responsibilities as men and fathers:

Père Goriot, by Honoré de Balzac. The tale of an impoverished old man who, it transpires, has sacrificed everything to make sure his daughters marry well.

Dombey and Son, by Charles Dickens. The tale of a cruel and heartless father who learns the meaning of love from his desperately ill son Paul.

Silas Marner, by George Eliot. The title character, a notorious miser, has the world opened up to him when he becomes the guardian of a foundling left on his doorstep.

The Brothers Karamazov, by Feodor Dostoyevsky. A negative example: the worst father in all literature. Don't try this at home.

Remember, you're invited to submit Reading Lists of your own. Send submissions to: Our Weekly Reader, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St. NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036.

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THE MOVIE LIST: Those who enjoyed the March and Louis Farrakhan's role in it so very much can always keep that special feeling alive through the pleasures of video rentals. Some recommendations:

Triumph of the Will, Leni Riefenstahl's account of another mass gathering—in Nuremberg, 1934, with happy Nazis cavorting to the strains of Adolf Hitler's soothing baritone.

Elmer Gantry, featuring Burt Lancaster's brilliant portrait of a pulpit-hogging charlatan.

All the King's Men, The Oscar-winning movie version of Robert Penn Warren's novel about Huey Long, with a spellbinding Broderick Crawford as the most dangerous demagogue in American history.

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*Retailer Education Study, Denver, CO, 1994. Dr. P. John Lymberopoulos, University of Colorado at Boulder.

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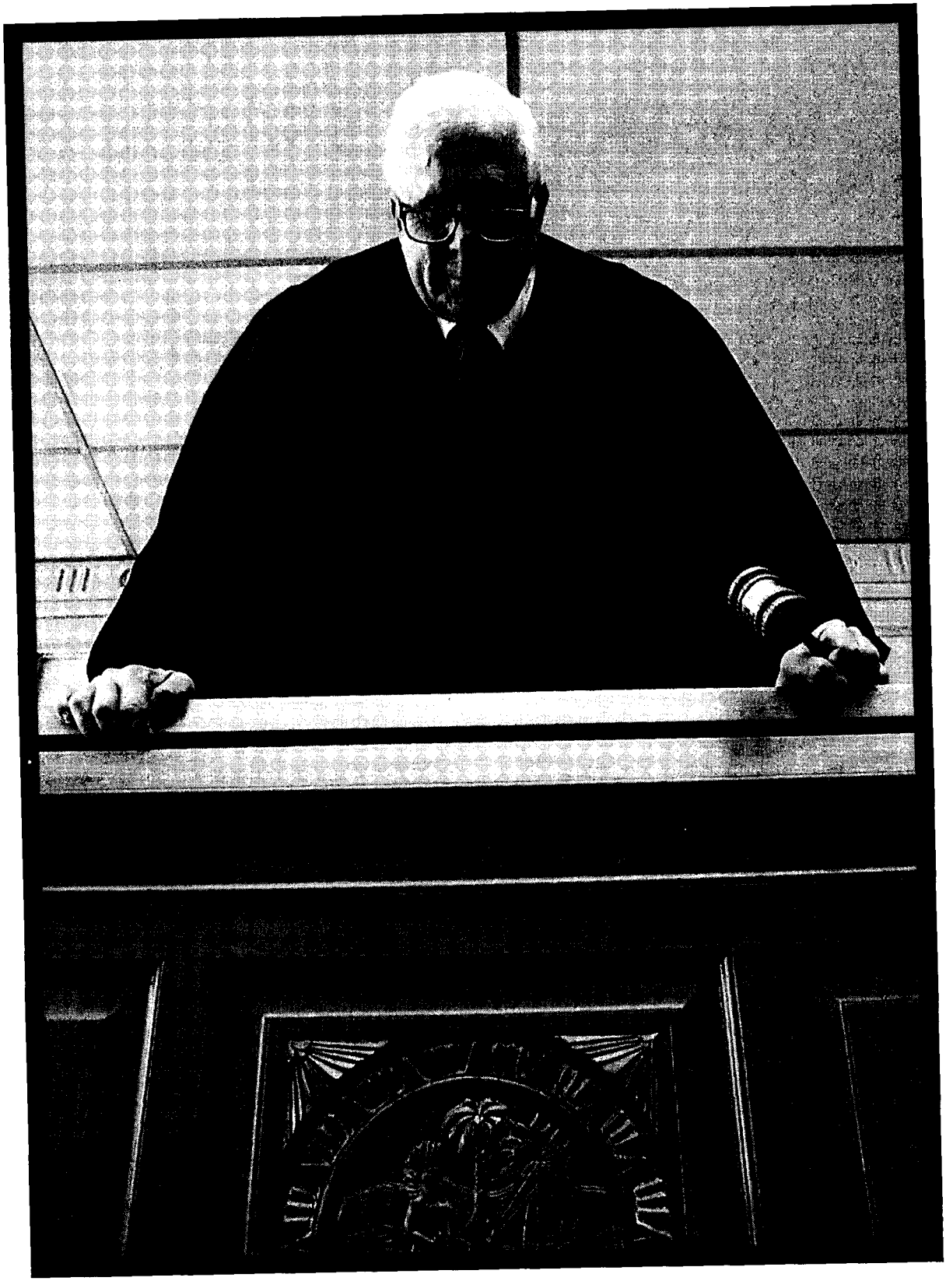

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Inside the March: Farrakhan Is King

By Matt Labash

Amidst metal chairs and rec-center acoustics in a frat house basement along a roughneck patch of northeast D.C., an alliance of Washington-area groups called the Youth Organizers Committee is about to announce its solidarity with Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March—his invitation for black men to "straighten their backs" and pledge their troths to family and community.

The organizers, from groups with freshly minted, oddly conjugated monikers such as Cease Fire Don't Smoke the Brothers, are skull-capped and kufi'ed. Even the Baptists look fairly serious about not getting out-Islam'ed in front of the media assemblage, and greet recurrent *As-Salaam-Alaikum*s with right-back-at-you *Alaikum-Salaam*s. They assume their places on the stage in wrist-clamped Panther stances, making sure their faces broadcast the proper radical menace.

Brother Ronald Moten of the aforementioned "Cease Fire" eventually gets down to business: "Any black man who speaks out against the Million Man March, I don't care if you're Christian, Muslim, whoever—we gonna start stepping to you," he says. "We're not with no more Uncle Toms and we're getting tired of those who cannot be behind the brothers on the street, and the brothers in prison have been neglected too long." Moten knows a thing or two about the latter brothers—he spent the last four years with them for selling drugs.

Next up is Malik Zulu Shabazz, founder of Unity Nation. Shabazz is traveling solo today, without the African Warrior Staff he often trots out when he wishes to put the fear of Allah into the hearts of onlookers. Citing an experience Farrakhan claims to have had where he was beamed aboard a spacecraft and told by the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam, that Ronald Reagan was plotting genocide for the black community, Shabazz bore witness:

"We stand today by clear and convincing evidence, by the drugs being poured into the community, by the men being locked up, by the lack of education and destruction of the inner cities, that there is a war being planned against black youth. And before the United Snakes government is allowed to fulfill this death plot against the black family and particularly the black man . . . the black man is ready to rise up and take his place."

Malik'll do just fine as one of Farrakhan's young ambassadors. For it is this very mix of metronomical oratory, scorched-earth paranoia, and penchant for Caucasian genocidal punchlines that has made Farrakhan the preeminent leader in the black community today. The Million Man March is his power play, the way he intends to prove to traditional black leadership and to the world of white devilry that he is the man to see. Considering that the march has no clear message and no real agenda, it's fair to say that the only real message, the only real agenda, is Louis Farrakhan.

The articulated plan is as follows: One million black men (no women invited except Maya Angelou, Rosa Parks, and the widows of slain civil-rights leaders, including one whose demise Farrakhan is long rumored to have played a part in) are to descend on the Mall in Washington. Numbers are hard to come by, especially from the Nation, but the one million thing sets the bar a bit high, considering one-fifteenth of all black men in America will have to show. Along with ousted NAACP leader Ben Chavis, his co-director, Farrakhan has deemed this "a holy day of atonement," lifting irony-free the name of the holiest day in the faith he so ecumenically described as a "gutter religion." A flier back in March urged African-American males to "realize our political strength, recognize our economic power, mobilize the men in our communities in unity" by coming to the march.

Who would stand beside Farrakhan had yet be determined at press time, but the former "Calypso Gene" Wolcott will no doubt get an intro like the one he received not long ago at the Apollo Theater in Harlem: "What does Tawana Brawley, Mike Tyson, Geronimo Pratt, Rev. Charles Cohen, Marion Barry, Michael Jackson . . . Judge Alcee Hastings, Rev. Al

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Sharpton, and now sister Quibilah Shabazz all have in common?" Deviant sexual habits? The same arraignment dates? Not at all: "They were defended by your champion and the defender of the Black nation in America today—the Honorable Louis Farrakhan."

Indeed, that seems to be his tagline these days—defender of the race. And the head-shaking fact is, he may deserve it. If the Million Man March even reaches 500,000, it will still double the size of the "I Have a Dream" March on Washington in 1963. If it cracks 600,000, it will eclipse the 1969 Vietnam War Protest to become the all-time top draw in the nation's capital.

Those numbers help explain why the march has been sanctioned by a sobering array of mainstream American political figures. It's not just Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, though they'll be there. It's Mayors Archer of Detroit, Schmoke of Baltimore, and Rendell of Philadelphia (a Jew, yet). There's also the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the National Council of Negro Women. Oh, and don't forget rap group Public Enemy, the Brand Nubians, and those wacky gangs who make the streets safe for crack, the Bloods and the Crips.

John Kascht

Farrakhan's aims reveal a gaping moral abyss in the world of black leadership. Where once Medgar Evers urged economic boycotts in Jackson, Miss., with a clear-cut goal of racial integration, Farrakhan is urging all non-attending blacks to stay home from work and school and make sure to keep all their money away from Mister Charlie: "Since so many of you love to be all white, then be all white, it's all right. America must taste how it feels when her ex-slave is not in her midst."

Where Martin Luther King's marches aimed for the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Farrakhan is taking public what should be private: "As the sons of a proud people, we are coming together and moving forward to chart the course for our families." But when Phil Donahue forewent the usual whiffleballs and asked the minister if any speakers will ask the marchers to actually do something—pay child support, or go home to their families in a community where half the households are headed by single mothers—Farrakhan started speaking of factory flights to the suburbs and the need to harness some of the $433 billion in expendable American income to help men pay for their children's education.

Conflicting messages abound. Farrakhan told Larry King last December: "We are tending to look at the black male as a criminal. And our march is to say we are not that." But then he bemoans the omnibus crime bill and three-strikes-you're-out as if they're nouveau "slavery."

"We have looked for too long for the government to solve our problems," Farrakhan recently stated, while comrade Chavis insisted, "We are not letting the government off the hook." Even the march's name, as the *Washington Times* noted, seems prone to schizophrenia: "Million Man March" or "Day of Atonement and Reconciliation" or "Day of Absence" or "Day of Positive Action."

But it's not as if the garbled Farrakhan message gets in the way of his popularity. He derives his appeal less from moral authority and clear thinking than from tapping pure, unfettered rage. As the University of Chicago's National Black Politics Study revealed in 1993-94, 69 percent of blacks surveyed thought Farrakhan represented a positive viewpoint as opposed to being a dangerous extremist—this on the heels of the publicity crush surrounding the 1993 Kean College speech delivered by his associate Khallid Muhammad, who gained headlines for his pithy characterization of Jews: "Why do you not understand my speech, Jew? Even because you cannot hear my word. You are of your father, the Devil." Muhammad later got a standing ovation at Howard University, the black school in Washington where most recently law students burst into hysterical cheers upon hearing of O.J. Simpson's release.

Those Howard students are not exactly vagrants and junkies, a fact that offers a glimpse into Farrakhan's remarkable popularity among upper-echelon blacks. And where African-American politicians are concerned, Farrakhan has successfully mau-maued the mau-mauers. The Congressional Black Caucus, under Kweisi Mfume's leadership, struck a "covenant" in the fall of 1993 with Farrakhan, patching up relations and

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further legitimizing him despite his frequent anabases into bogs of lunacy.

It's not as if the black congressmen are strangers themselves to some of his more radical agenda items, such as reparations—the idea that white America should pay the descendants of slaves for the indenture of their ancestors. Caucus members have proposed reparations bills over the years; even in a hostile Republican climate, Rep. Earl Hilliard of Alabama piped up this past July, "I believe in reparations to truly make the playing field level."

Still, why the blind acquiescence to Farrakhan? After all, the CBC is made up of people who have garnered tens of thousands of votes at the ballot box and who have therefore laid fair claim to leadership. First, if you are a black politician, you don't want ideas like "We will tar and feather them, we will hang them from the highest limb, we will chop off their heads and roll them down the street"—spoken by somebody who means it, somebody with followers—gaining a foothold among the constituents back home in the district.

New York Republican Rep. Peter King has battled Farrakhan for two years over the estimated $15 million the Nation of Islam has earned from federal contracts. "The problem is that too many of the black leaders are reluctant to take Farrakhan on," King says, recounting a bipartisan press conference attacking Farrakhan in which he deliberately tried to include local ministers. "We must have several hundred black churches, and friends of mine came back and said the pastors, quite frankly, were afraid to come because Farrakhan has such strong support among their congregations."

Which buttresses the dirty little secret of black politics—that surrogate anti-Semitic buckshot never hurt anyone's street credentials. The truth is, Farrakhan can fill the Washington Convention Center a lot faster than, say, Maryland Rep. Albert Wynn, whose very name causes most African Americans across the country to say, "Who?" And the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish group that is one of his most vocal opponents, doesn't carry much weight with Maxine Waters's South Central L.A. district. Figures obtained by the Center for Responsive Politics show that in the 1993-94 cycle, pro-Israel PACs gave only $58,350 to the entire Black Caucus, while Farrakhan's lecture fees can top $20,000 in an inner-city theater. Historically, Jewish money has fallen on black politicians like manna, but no longer. Thus, Farrakhan goes unchallenged by petrified legislators who have already lost a lot with his ascension to power, and must be fearful of losing more.

Like the Black Caucus, many of the march's endorsers seem to be devoid of critical thought. They say they support the march's goals. What goals, exactly? Farrakhan describes the march as follows: "We believe that, as men, we must recognize and unconditionally Atone for the absence, in too many cases, of the Black male as the head of the household, positive role model and builder of our community. We believe that we must Atone for, and establish positive solutions to, the abuse and misuse of our girls." But his solution to this last plank? Invite O.J. Simpson. This is the same minister who told a 1992 rally for Mike Tyson, after the boxer was convicted of raping Desiree Washington: "You bring a hawk at the chicken yard and wonder why the chicken got eaten up." Farrakhan recently atoned for this statement by telling Phil Donahue, "I never believed that Mike Tyson actually raped her." And added that if his daughter went to a man's room in the midnight hour, "and she were raped, well, it would be a little different with us, but I would certainly punish my daughter."

Such inconsistencies are troublesome—enough to have caused major schisms in what once looked to be a unified clergy front that could have given Farrakhan the religious cover he needs. He suffered a very public rebuff by the two million-member Progressive National Baptist Convention and the 8.2 million-member National Baptist Convention headed by Henry Lyons. Jesse Jackson said publicly that Lyons supported the march, and Lyons, Jackson's former campaign manager, responded by calling his assertion "an absolute lie."

The Rev. Bennett Smith of the Progressive National Baptist Convention also declined, saying, "We have difficulty marching under the banner of any other name than Jesus Christ. But this is a march originated and promoted by the Nation of Islam."

And though the buzzword "ecumenical" began to circulate as fast as Jesse Jackson could square up to a microphone, it would appear from Farrakhan's original tenets that he too might be reluctant to endorse another's banner. He may be prone to torch one if it gets in the way, as an article in the March 29 issue of his sect's newspaper, the *Final Call*, put it: "In this day and time, opposition to the establishment of Islam will be totally and completely destroyed."

The march even seems to be dedicated to advancing what Nation of Islamites call the Muslim Program (a program that would not make much sense to the 600 million people around the world who practice Islam in the traditional sense). When Farrakhan began heavily promoting the Million Man March last December, the

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Final Call reported that Arif Muhammad, the nation's mid-Atlantic minister and march coordinator, said "march plans are evolving but will emphasize points contained in the Muslim Program which range from social and economic justice to land and reparations."

Another article in the same issue said, "Minister Louis Farrakhan has stressed that the march will be unlike any other because it will bring Black men to the fore and put the 'Muslim Program,' a wide-ranging plan for independence and self-determination, to America's leaders."

A close look at the Program would be enough to give pause to Smith or anyone else with even a *soupçon* of prudence. The highlights are laid out in every issue of the *Final Call*. Under a "What The Muslims Want" headline, they state: "We want our people in America whose parents or grandparents were descendants from slaves to be allowed to establish a separate state or territory of their own—either on this continent or elsewhere. We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to provide such land and that the areas must be fertile and minerally rich."

As if signing away the Great Basin isn't penance enough, here's the rider: "We believe that our former slave masters are obligated to maintain and supply our needs in this separate territory for the next 20 to 25 years."

And this: "We want freedom for all believers of Islam now held in federal prisons. We want freedom for all Black men and women now under death sentences. We want the government of the United States to exempt our people from ALL taxation as long as we are deprived of equal justice under the laws of the land."

But still, this doesn't seem to deter the likes of Congressional Black Caucus chairman Donald Payne, who like many has attempted to divorce Farrakhan from the march and seems blissfully unconcerned that the minister is the one setting the agenda, driving the news—the be-all, the end-all, the whole march in himself. As of press time, no speakers list had been issued, and when I asked Sister Angela 6X Bone, the march's national director and spokesperson, when they'd reveal who would be speaking, she defiantly said, "Who says we'll make it public? Everybody assumes we will, but maybe we won't."

Conceding only that it was a "collaborative effort," Sister Angela said speakers are made known to the march's National Planning Board, but not necessarily all speakers and not necessarily all members of the committee. Thus, it will be entirely up to the Minister and his flock whether the program features, say, "Farrakhan's flamethrower," Khallid Muhammad.

Khallid Muhammad will definitely be speaking at Malik Shabazz's two-day "Black Holocaust" right before the march, where he will mix with the likes of Leonard Jeffries of City College, who maintains that blacks descend from "Sun People" and whites from "Ice People," and the Rev. George Stallings, who left the Catholic Church to start his Imani Temple after being accused of molesting altar boys. Stallings gingerly deflected criticism of Farrakhan's leadership role at a September church rally by saying, "What do you want, some milquetoast sissy faggot to lead you to the promised land?"

Chavis's assistant Gary Foster insists the Million Man March hasn't sanctioned the Black Holocaust gathering. But Shabazz told me, "Mr. Louis Farrakhan in Houston in June was informed of the conference and we asked him whether it would be okay to have it on the weekend of the Million Man March and he approved us."

Lest anyone think Farrakhan's ambitions are getting in the way of the old inflammatory rhetoric, there is only a slight difference between now and the greatest hits of yesteryear. Remember 1985's "It is an act of mercy to white people that we end your world" or 1988's "The Jews cannot defeat me, so I will grind them and crush them into little bits"? Well, these days his strains are a bit muted, lacking perhaps the old red-meat pithiness, but just as hateful nevertheless, with conspiratorial flow charts connecting all heinous acts to whichever Jewish financier comes to mind. Even in a forum as mainstream as *This Week With David Brinkley*, Farrakhan offered only the most limp-wristed deflection when Sam Donaldson asked about the meaning of his comment, "Little Jews died while big Jews made money in World War II. Little Jews were being turned into soap, while big Jews washed themselves with it."

"That's an allegorical thing," Farrakhan said.

And will anyone buck up while Farrakhan surveys his troops in his mack-daddy imported silks, and realize that they are legitimizing the Tom Metzger, the George Lincoln Rockwell, the Adolf Hitler of the Maryam Mosque? Rep. Peter King says it looks doubtful: "That's why I'm critical of the Black leadership, because it's very easy when people are in poverty, are living in dire circumstances, to fall prey to demagogues and that's what Farrakhan obviously is. And that's when it's most incumbent upon responsible leaders to step in and say, this [is] not the way to go—this guy is dangerous, this guy is wrong, this guy is evil. But they seem afraid to do it." ♦

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The Next Million Men: How to Save the Children

By Albert Pyle

This is a message for a group of people more often spoken of than spoken to. As the dust settles from the march on Washington asserting the dignity of African American males generally, this is meant in particular for you—for unemployed black men.

Some of you may have been too broke to make the trip. Don't bother feeling left out of all the excitement. If coming to the capital for a big dose of rhetorical boilerplate ever solved anything in the past, it is surely not the solution for these times. Besides, there is good news for you. The jobs you wanted may have vanished for good, but even without them you can save the country.

Who wants to save a country, you ask, that can't even give you a job? Well, it may not be the country you want or the country you deserve, but it's the country you live in. It's where your kids live. And it's those kids who are going to turn the country around.

Neil Shigley

You know your kids are in danger. And you know that the biggest danger to your kids is not that they could get hit by a bullet on the way home from school—which they could—but that they could go nowhere for the rest of their lives. Your kids, the ones in the crummy cities, the ones getting a fake education in crummy school systems, are as bad off as your grandparents were on their unpaved streets in the small-town South. Worse. Your kids can't even take a walk and go fishing.

You don't need to go back to school or get rich or even get a job to save your children. But you will have to endure more than your share of discomfort. In fact, you'll probably take a lot of abuse. From all sides and all angles. Because what you have to do is give up on yourself. To give your kids a chance, a real chance, at making it in America, you're going to have to give up on what it is that fuels the great American fires of motivation these days, self-fulfillment.

Albert Pyle is a writer in Cincinnati.

What's self-fulfillment got to do with it? You're just looking for a job, right? Well, it's the national creed of self-fulfillment that is keeping you from doing what you've got to do. Which is a whole lot more than buy your son the Nikes he thinks he has to have.

You say unemployed men don't go around talking about self-fulfillment. They don't have to. They've got an entire generation of journalists, educators, mental-health professionals, clergypersons, and magazine-based feminists to do it for them. All those folks swear by self-fulfillment. And they can't swear off it. Because the minute they start to look at the mess they've made of their children's lives, of your children's lives, in the interest of becoming the well-paid professionals they believe they deserve to be, they get cold sweats and the shakes. So they don't think about what a cancer the goal of self-fulfillment is. But you can. You have to. Because what it is you've got to do is become an immigrant and re-enter America.

That's right. The one thing you can do right now to save the kids, save the people, save the country, is to give up your rights as an American citizen.

What rights? Well, you don't have to give up the ones in the Constitution. Not that they seem to be doing you a whole lot of good right now. But you have to give up the rights that really matter to native-born Americans.

The right to whine.
The right to demand service.
The right to be supported.
The right to fulfill yourself.

You have to be an immigrant with none of those rights. Even though you and your ancestors have been here longer than all but about 5 percent of the country. Even though you by rights should be showing immigrants how to do it. Even though, if things were fair, you'd be as much a role model as Colin Powell or John Shalikashvili or Henry Kissinger or Jerry Springer or Peter Jennings. Unfair as it may seem, you should be doing everything you can to lead your life as if you were just off the boat.

Because immigrants make it. Time and again.

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They come here without a dime, and within a generation it seems like every last one has his own business, and kids in Stanford, passing not just you but about 30 million other natives who stand by blinking in disbelief and resentment. But the immigrants don't care. And if they can make it, so can you. All you've got to do is remember one thing. But then you've got to make everything you do reflect that one thing. What you've got to remember, what the immigrants never forget, is this: Family first.

Family first.

Not self-fulfillment. Not legal rights. Not stuff. Not style. Not sports. Not church. Not country.

Family. Family. Family. Family.

Not Marian Edelman's family. Not Phyllis Schlafly's family. Not Coretta King's family. Not John Gotti's family. Not the Family of Man. Not the new family down the block with two dads or the nice lady who just had a baby without ever having to meet a man. Your family.

Neil Shigley

Your family first. The immigrant way. Everything you do, every day of your life, should be aimed at putting your family ahead of everybody around you. You work the system to get them ahead. It's retrogressive. It's anti-democratic. It's unfair to other families. And it works. You know it does. You've seen how the Koreans are doing here. How the West Indians are doing. How the Russians are doing. How the Palestinians are doing.

Does being an immigrant mean you have to run a grocery store from five in the morning to midnight? Do your children and your grandmother have to stock the shelves and keep the peach cans dusted? Does nobody get a day off? Can there be no nice car for the weekend? Maybe.

Does being an immigrant mean nobody ever gets to look sharp? That you live in too few rooms with no television set for the video games? Probably.

But that's just the small stuff. The hardest thing, the most important thing, is that you are going to have to take control of your children. Tight control. Like nothing you've ever seen.

Because the great immigrant dream is to get your children educated. Not graduated. Educated. Every last immigrant wants to see his children sucking every bit of income-enhancing, class-elevating, caste-eliminating morsel of education out of what is still the greatest system of cheap, universal education in the world. That should be your dream, too. It must be. The immigrants who make it, make that dream come true.

And how they do it is so very interesting. And you can do it, too, if you ignore your enemies, the people working the education racket. Because those condescending administrators, hypocritical union officials, ignorant professors of pedagogy, and program-crazy politicians, so many of whom send their kids to private schools, by the way, are going to tell you that you don't have the education yourself to do the job. That educators are the only people with the stuff your children need.

What you have to know to protect yourself from the people who have already proved that they can't handle your kids is that the immigrants who are soaring to the top of the SATs have been coached by people who don't even speak English, much less do higher math. They've been coached by their families. In a lot of families, the kids are coached by grandparents while the parents are running up seams or stacking canned peas. The tutors are old people who are too scared to leave the apartment. But they're not scared of the kids. They don't believe the kids when the kids say they don't have homework. And they don't let the kids close their books until it's time to clear the table for supper.

Your situation, gentlemen, is different. It's not age that's keeping you from a paying job. And the mother of your kids may be married to someone who doesn't want you in his house. Your children's mother might have a job that makes her think she's got the moral upper hand. But you can have the same effect as those grandparents. You've got the time. And you're bigger than the kids. You can meet those children at school and take them to your home to study. Or to a church basement. Or a library. Any place that has no television set will do. You can sit with your children, right at the same table, all afternoon. You can tell your children that there won't be any basketball games or video games or telephone time or little visits with friends. There won't be any of that until the homework is done and done right.

This will be the hardest thing you will ever do in your life. Your children will revile you. No, that's too mild. They will become your worst nightmare. You will think that they have been possessed by demons. They will lie on the floor and scream. They will call you names that will make you want to smack them in the chops. Their friends will phone them and page

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them and your children will tell you are violating federal law if you don't let them answer. The kids on the other end will probably be every bit as nasty. That's why, if you can swing it, the church basement might be your best bet as a study hall.

Once they understand that you aren't kidding, your kids will go on strike. This may last for weeks or months. But sooner or later one of them, probably a girl, will crack. Girls are a little more sensible than boys and a lot more politically astute. One of the girls will probably try studying just for the pleasure of making the boys furious. And you will have begun to win.

No-nonsense, boot camp discipline is what you want to keep in mind. You want fast justice when you deal with children who are trying to get out of learning. They need to know that they have no choice. As long as you are alive and breathing, you are going to see that they stay inside and crack the books. That's the immigrant way.

Neil Shigley

Your kids will study. They will study because there's nothing else to do. And they will study because it will matter to them what you think. The hostage syndrome will kick in, the one that brings prisoners around to the point of view of their captors. But something else will come into play, too. You are going to replace the great bugaboo of American teenage life, the peer group. Kids, who are assumed to have no minds of their own, are supposed to respond to peer pressure over every other influence. Well, they're not going to be seeing a lot of those peers. They're going to be seeing you. They'll be seeing more of you than they see of their teachers, their television sets, maybe even their mothers. You will begin to matter in a way that you didn't matter before, and in a way that will differ from the people who are paid to deal with your children, and in a way that peer groups don't. Unless your children are so stupid that they can't learn anything, they will eventually learn that, unlike teachers, peer groups, politicians, or television sets, you have a real interest in their doing better.

It's only fair to warn you that you might get in trouble for this. Some social worker from a bureau somewhere may show up to see about the crying and moaning. Lie to them. Tell them you're a counselor from a federally funded, locally planned program for at-risk kids. When your children try to shame you for lying, tell them to shut up and study.

The people you're really going to upset are the ones who have devoted their lives to replacing the family with institutions. You're going to be going *mano a mano* with every last activist who thinks "quality child care" is a government duty and the answer for your kids. You'll be disturbing the plans of welfare reformers and deadbeat-dad hunters and all those feeding off the assumption that families can no longer rear their children. This army includes Republicans and Democrats, rich people and working poor. And it includes people who call themselves leaders in your community.

All of those people believe that you are incapable of doing what you have to do. All of those people believe that you cannot function as a man if you are tending to your children instead of working at a job that pays. All of those people think your virility is so fragile that it will snap under the strain of a role that is not directly inherited from hunters. Many of those people think you are the wrong person to be the chief influence in the life of your child. Most of them believe in their hearts that you as an unemployed black American male are a lost cause. None of those people has ever suggested that you constitute the greatest unused resource in the country. They don't think you can do it.

Is that true? Is it more manly to hang out doing nothing than doing something? Is cash the only measure of your manhood, or does outcome count? If you had a job and your wife had a job, would the house in the suburbs that people hope you will buy give your children something better than the time you could spend with them now, seeing that they don't grow into brats?

That last one ought to be the clincher for you. Everybody talks about the trouble your kids are in. Maybe you should take a look at the kids who are being raised by day care, video games, TV, and microwave ovens while their parents hump for the payment on a house with too many rooms in a cul de sac far from the ghetto.

Anybody who's looked closely at those children sees that they are incapable of taking adult roles in a participatory democracy. They know nothing of work, nothing of humor, nothing of joint effort, nothing of sacrifice. Those privileged latchkey kids are lost. And no one's looking for them. They are no competition for your children. Your kids can beat them easily and go on to take over the country's machinery. But they have to be immigrants first. You can bring them to America. ♦

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The Benevolent State and The Need for Heroes

By Clarence Thomas

Today, our culture is far less likely to raise up heroes than it is to exalt victims—individuals who are overcome by the sting of oppression, injustice, adversity, neglect, or misfortune. Today, it seems that those who have succumbed to their circumstances are more likely to be singled out than those who have overcome them. What caused this cultural shift from an emphasis on heroes to a preoccupation with victims?

First, our political and legal systems now actively encourage people to claim victim status and to make demands on society for reparations and recompense. The classical conception was that government and the law were meant to ensure freedom and equality of opportunity by giving people the most room possible for self-provision and self-determination.

Between the New Deal and the 1960s, a far different view began to hold sway—namely, that the role of the state was to eliminate want, suffering, and adversity. Freedom was no longer simply a right to self-provision and self-determination, but was instead a right to make demands on government and society for one's own well-being and happiness.

No doubt, this gradual transformation in ideas took root and flourished (at least in part) because of the aggregate growth in wealth and resources we were witnessing in this country during the course of the 20th century. Against the background of this prosperity, poverty stood out in bold relief and in uncomfortably stark contrast, even as the number of people suffering from it shrank.

It is not surprising that people began to think that, in a world of seemingly unlimited resources, adversity could be eliminated or, at the very least, remedied. The ideal of the "benevolent state" took hold, one in which neglect, misfortune, and injustice did not have to be accepted as inevitable facts of life. Good government and laws could step in when necessary, as many believed they had successfully done during two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the civil-rights movement.

If one assumes that suffering and adversity can be eliminated, but sees a number of people continuing to suffer from adversity or misfortune, then there must be forces that relegate the have-nots to this fate. Or, at the very least, the less fortunate are being ignored. Those facing adversity are, therefore, victims of a society that is not doing as much as it could (if it so desired), and these victims can (and should) stake a legitimate claim against the political and legal systems for recompense. According to this view, neglect or selfishness on the part of society and government is responsible for the sting of oppression, injustice, and misfortune that the unfortunate feel today.

In light of this modern ideology, is it any surprise that people identify themselves as victims and make demands on the political system for special status and entitlements? Our culture expects (and indeed, encourages) people to do exactly that. Consider, for example, the creation and continued expansion of the welfare state and other social programs. How often have we heard proponents of these programs lull the poor into thinking that they are hopeless victims, incapable of triumphing over adversity without "benevolent intervention" by the state? How often have we heard these proponents encourage the less fortunate to become indignant about their situation in life and more demanding on the political system to find solutions to their problems?

It is not only in the political system, though, that we see our society and its leaders succumbing to the modern ideology of victimhood. As with the political system, people today are strongly encouraged to make demands on the legal system by claiming victim status. Courts are viewed as an effective means of forcing (or at least pressuring) political institutions into meeting demands for protected status and new rights or entitlements. Pointing to perceived victimization by "the system" or by others in society, our legal culture has often told the least fortunate that their last hope is to claim special legal rights and benefits, or to seek exoneration for the harmful, criminal consequences of

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their acts. In these ways, courts are called upon to solve social problems by creating special rules and by crafting remedies that will satisfy the claims and demands of victim groups but that do not apply to all.

There was a time when appealing to the legal system was not as easy a task as making demands on the political system. Our legal system has traditionally required that redress for grievances be granted only after very exacting standards have been met. There had to be, for example, very distinct, individualized harm. And, the definition of harm was circumscribed by a traditional understanding of adjudication under the common law, where narrow disputes regarding traditional property rights were resolved among private parties who could not settle matters on their own. Very generalized claims of misfortune or oppression or neglect—the kinds of assertions made in the political system—would not easily fit into this common mold of court activity. It would not be enough for people to be indignant, angry, and demanding about their situation in life. There would have to be an assertion of a legal wrong and a persuasive argument that a legal remedy was available.

The pressure of victimology revolutionized—and that word does not always have positive connotations—the court and the law. For those in our culture seeking to use the courts as agents of social change, poverty, unemployment, social deviancy, and criminal behavior were not just unfair conditions in our society that could be eliminated if only people or politicians cared. Instead, these abstract problems were personified as the direct result of actions of local schools, churches, businesses, and other social institutions so that they could be sued for causing individualized harm to the victims. Based on this new kind of harm—a kind of legalistic understanding of "victimage"—the courts were said to be obligated to recognize special rights and protected status under the law.

But the rise of victimhood and its perpetuation by the government and the law are only part of the modern tragedy. There is also the dearth of heroes in our culture. Significantly, as the number of these "victim groups" has escalated, there has been a corresponding decline in the amount of attention paid to heroes or, even worse, a conscious attempt to cheapen their achievements. Today, success or a commitment to fighting for noble ideas is attributed to self-interest, revenge, self-aggrandizement, insecurity, or some other psychological idiosyncrasy.

Just thumb through recently publis ed biographies in the library or bookstore. In many of them, it is not a conscious effort to be virtuous or to do good, but instead a series of unforeseeable and external forces that leads to greatness or success. And these books introduce us to the "never-before-seen" foibles, mistakes, and transgressions of people our culture idealized for centuries. The message is that these heroes are really just regular people capable of folly and vice who happened to have a few good breaks. In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville anticipated this state of affairs: "Historians who live in democratic times do not only refuse to admit that some citizens may influence the destiny of a people, but also take away from the people themselves the faculty of modifying their own lot and make them depend on an inflexible providence or a kind of blind fatality."

It should surprise no one that our culture now has far less difficulty recognizing celebrities than it does those who achieve success as a result of personal effort and character traits that we traditionally would consider heroic. Denigrating heroic virtue—in other words, chalking up heroism to circumstance—fits quite well with the notion that we must all be the same and that there can be no significant differences in our achievement, social standing, or wealth.

Anyone can see what these intellectual currents have done to the ideals of human dignity, personal responsibility, and self-determination. Preoccupation with victim status has caused people to focus covetously on what they do not have in comparison to others, or on what has happened to them in the past. Many fail to see the freedom they do have and the talents and resources that are at their disposal.

Our culture today discourages, and even at times stifles, heroic virtues—fortitude, character, courage, a sense of self-worth. For so many, the will, the spirit, and a firm sense of self-respect and self-worth have been suffocated. They do not expect the less fortunate to accept responsibility for (and overcome) their present circumstances, to succeed in savoring triumph over adversity.

But the culture of victimology—with its emphasis on the so-called "benevolent state"—delivers an additional (and perhaps worse) blow to dignity and self-worth. When the less fortunate do accomplish something, they are often denied the sense of achievement which is so very important for strengthening and empowering the human spirit. They owe all their achievements instead to the anointed in society who supposedly changed the circumstances, not to their own efforts. Long hours, hard work, discipline, and sacrifice are all irrelevant. In a world where the less

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fortunate are given special treatment and benefits—and, significantly, where they are told that whatever gains or successes they have realized would not be possible without protected status and special benefits—the so-called beneficiaries of state-sponsored benevolence are denied the opportunity to derive any sense of satisfaction from their hard work and self-help. There is no one among us who views what others do for us the same way we view what we do for ourselves. No matter how much we appreciate the help, it is still just that—help, not achievement.

It also bears noting that our culture's preoccupation with grouping victims has balkanized society. The "we/they" mentality of calling oneself a victim breeds social conflict and calls into question the moral authority of society. The idea that whole groups or classes are victims robs individuals of an independent spirit. Instead, they are just moving along with the "herd" of other victims. Such individuals also lack any incentive to be independent, because they know that as part of an oppressed group they will neither be singled out for the life choices they make, nor capable of distinguishing themselves by their own efforts.

Of course, de-emphasizing heroism exacerbates all these problems. Human beings have always faced the temptation to permit adversity or hate to dominate and destroy their lives. To counter this tendency, society had heroes—people capable of overcoming the very adversity or injustice that currently affects today's victims. They rose above their circumstances and inherent imperfections. Heroes cherished freedom, and tried to accomplish much with what little they had. Heroes demonstrated perseverance in the face of adversity and used hardship as a means to strive for greater virtue. And heroes accepted responsibility—they did what they did despite fear and temptation, and tried to do the right thing when presented with a choice between good and evil. It is awfully hard for society to inculcate these values without some useful models from the past and present.

In idealizing heroic virtue and criticizing the victim ideology of our day, I am not saying that society is free from intractable and very saddening injustice and harm. That would be untrue. But the idea that government can be the primary instrument for the elimination of misfortune is a fundamental misunderstanding of the human condition. There have always been bad and suffering in this world, and we must admit that wrongs have been and will continue to be committed. People will always be treated unfairly. We can never eliminate oppression or adversity completely, though we can, and should, fight injustice as best we can.

But keep in mind that all of us are easily tempted to think of ourselves as victims and thereby permit adversity to be the defining feature of our lives. In so doing, we deny the very attributes that are at the core of human dignity—freedom of will, the capacity to choose between good and bad, and the ability to endure adversity and use it for gain. Victimization destroys the human spirit. ♦

Is Colin Powell Really Like Ike?

By Everett Carll Ladd

The presidency is as important to Americans symbolically as in its practical power. This is why matters of character and personality have loomed large in the public's assessment of candidates for the office. While we often haven't found the desired mix, we've consistently sought presidents to be exemplars—both of things we value in personal terms and of the nation itself as a large moral enterprise.

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For this reason, it's not surprising Americans have rarely warmed to displays of strong partisanship in their president. A national leader should be somewhat above the partisan fray—at least its narrower expressions.

This basic expectation tells us a lot about why we are where we are in the 1996 presidential race. The incumbent gets considerable credit for his political skills and energy, but he continues to get subpar grades in the test of national leadership. Through his 32 months in office, Bill Clinton has only rarely ele-

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vated his presidential approval percentages out of the mediocre 40s.

On the Republican side, none of the announced candidates is anywhere. This is true even of Bob Dole, though he is not only the best known contender, but is well respected for his many accomplishments. This is why 46 percent of Republicans and those leaning Republican polled by Gallup September 22-24 made Senator Dole their first choice among the declared candidates.

Kent Lemon

But only a tiny fraction of this 46 percent is clear, unambiguous support for Bob Dole as the next president. Politics-watchers would generally be better off ignoring the early polling trial heats altogether until some means is found of measuring depth as well as breadth. Dole's support is the proverbial "mile wide and an inch deep." His overall weakness with the electorate is shown by his trailing Clinton in every recent two-way trial heat—even though the president hasn't enlarged his base of support from the 43 percent backing him in November 1992.

Dole's weakness among the electorate at large is surpassed by Phil Gramm's and Newt Gingrich's. The inability of any of these three heavyweights to gain broad presidential backing as inclusive leaders able to set a high moral tone for the country has created a kind of vacuum, which politics as much as nature abhors. Enter Colin Powell.

History never repeats, but in America it often does a remarkable imitation. The parallels between what happened in the Republican presidential nomination contest of 1951-52 and what's happened thus far this year are, I believe, instructive.

When the 1952 contest began, Senator Bob Taft's partisan credentials were unmatched by those of any rival. A Gallup survey of 1,740 GOP county chairmen in the fall of 1951 found 59 percent endorsing the Ohio senator ("Mr. Republican"). Taft's ability and integrity were widely admired. Nonetheless, not only did Eisenhower best Taft by a large margin among independents, he led narrowly among rank-and-file Republican identifiers as well.

Party machinery had vastly more influence over presidential nominations in the fifties than it has had since 1968, and Taft's candidacy remained a formidable one right through the GOP convention. Eisenhower had his own strong organizational base, of course. Its cause was aided immeasurably by the fact that the polls showed Ike leading Taft among Republican adherents at every stage in the campaign. What's more, while Taft looked weak in trial heats with Democrats, Eisenhower looked strong. Two-way trial heats of late 1951, for example, put Ike way ahead of Harry Truman, but showed Truman beating Taft—much as the polls today have Clinton ahead of Dole but trailing Powell.

It may be objected that Eisenhower's strength reflected a unique experience—the exceptional renown he earned for leading the victorious Allied military effort in Europe. This objection misses the mark. Another U.S. general came out of World War II with a fame that rivaled Ike's. Asked in August 1945 who they thought might make a good president, 26 percent named Douglas MacArthur, 24 percent Dwight Eisenhower—with no one else in the running. MacArthur's prestige did not fade. A Gallup poll of December 1951 asking, what man "do you admire most?" found MacArthur first, Eisenhower second.

MacArthur and his friends thought this regard might translate into the GOP nomination. In fact, the earliest polls showed this general way behind both Eisenhower and Taft, and from this weak starting point MacArthur faded fast. He was much admired—but not for the presidency. In the context of this office, his "negatives" were far too high. Americans saw a rigidity that would stand in the way of broad, unifying national political leadership.

Eisenhower's fame as a general shot him into the game, but other things put him over the top. Americans didn't know just where he fitted politically. In 1947 roughly the same proportion of the public regarded him as a Democrat as thought him a Republican. In 1948 he had more general public support among Democrats than among Republicans. In January of that year, Gallup found him ahead of Truman among heavily Democratic labor union members. In January 1950, only 40 percent of those interviewed by Gallup thought that Eisenhower was on the conservative side whereas 60 percent saw him as a liberal!

But that was just fine. "I like Ike." We like our presidents to be somehow "independent," above the fray. Ronald Reagan, who did have sharp edges ideologically, understood the danger in this to presidential leadership. He compensated through personal warmth and geniality. Equally important, he appealed to a large, unifying idea of America as a "city upon a hill." Different though they were in many ways, Eisenhower and Reagan both carried the country on personality and character.

And this is much where Colin Powell is today.

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Though we don't yet know a lot about him in political terms, what we do know we like—it seems balanced and sensible. What's more important, we like what we see in him as a person and what he symbolizes in national aspirations. Like Ike he seems "independent," above the narrower dimensions of partisanship which have never appealed to us when we've considered the requirements of the country's one great national office.

There remains the ever-present issue of race. At this point, white Americans say they are ready to support Colin Powell. Indeed, a Gallup survey taken October 5-7 showed him besting Bill Clinton among whites by a 17-point margin (54 to 37 percent), while trailing the president badly (25 to 68 percent) among blacks. Overall, it was Powell 51 percent, Clinton 40 percent. My guess is that this pattern of support will hold up. If a candidate, Colin Powell is likely to tap further the views and values that Dwight Eisenhower drew on so successfully. ♦

Second Amendment Blues: The NRA Under the Gun

By Dave Shiflett

Any organization that horrifies the kind of people who embrace seat belt laws and Big Mac nutritional labels has a corkscrew appeal for those who delight in tweaking liberal sensibilities. But aside from the pleasure of an alliance with a group considered positively Satanic by their common ideological opponents, some conservatives are getting tired of the National Rifle Association. Indeed, the NRA has proved itself capable, in the year since it began its very public assault on federal law-enforcement agencies, of scaring off many of its natural supporters.

For those who believe private gun ownership is an unalloyed constitutional right that needs a strong defense against prohibitionist forces, the NRA's continuing status as the second-most controversial public-interest group in Washington (the first, of course, is the Tobacco Institute) poses a problem. Since many Americans favor Second Amendment rights but are uncomfortable with absolutist posturing, the NRA's image as a radical organization may incline the public to distance itself from its natural sympathies. That is why it becomes more than a parochial matter if former NRA board member Dave Edmonson, among others, is correct in charging that the NRA's current political leadership is too extreme for all but the hard core.

The NRA's opponents recognize this, of course, and their strategy takes advantage of it. They use diversionary tactics; rather than risking the kind of head-on confrontation required to ban private ownership of guns, they seek to roll back gun ownership one step at a time. The first step is to weaken the NRA, and the way to do that is to accuse the 3.2 million-member organization of working to protect the rights of dangerous fringe elements, not the Constitution.

Mike Beard, head of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, suggests that the NRA may be divided into two camps. "I think there are two NRAs. The average member and the highly politicized leadership in Washington." He believes it is possible to convince the "average member" that the "highly politicized leadership in Washington" is simply too radical. And that is what he tries to do.

For its part, the NRA and its defenders argue that its successes against the gun prohibitionists speak for themselves. The group has long struggled against a biased press—and won time after time, especially in Congress. "This idea that the NRA has marginalized itself is popular with people who believe that the only way to get respect inside the Beltway is to be Gergen-like," says David Kopel, author and editor of several books on gun control, policy analyst with the Cato Institute, and a lifetime member of the NRA. Kopel also argues that NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre was not entirely out of line when he referred to federal agents as "jack-booted thugs" in a fund-raising letter. Instead, says Kopel, the line took on a life of its own after the Oklahoma City bombing, thanks in large part to the Clinton administration's willingness to exploit the horror felt at the killing of hundreds of people, many of them government employees.

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NRA board member Robert K. Brown, most famously known for publishing *Soldier of Fortune*, agrees: "LaPierre didn't say that all law enforcement people are jack-booted thugs. But he's right to say that some are, which is why I wouldn't have apologized for the statement."

To complete the chorus, NRA spokeswoman Tanya Metaksa defends LaPierre's blast by saying that the line wasn't a LaPierre original anyway. "John Dingell used it first," she says, as if referring to the liberal congressman from Michigan closes the issue. Anyway, asks Metaksa, if the NRA is so extreme, why is it doing so well, both in total membership and the ability to get its legislation passed?

Metaksa's seems a bold statement in light of the group's widely reported loss of 300,000 members, including George Bush, who bailed out because of the "jack-booted thug" crack and earned himself a torrent of editorial praise unseen since the day he promised to raise taxes. Metaksa has a more mundane explanation for the membership decline: "We raised dues from $25 a year to $35 a year and actually lost fewer people than we expected. What hasn't been reported is that membership is rising again. During the month of June, we gained new members—not renewals but new people—at a rate of 2,000 a day."

In fact, she explains, NRA membership is claimed by millions of people who aren't on the official rolls. Metaksa cites a 1994 *New York Times* exit poll indicating that 37 percent of respondents believed themselves to be affiliated with the organization. Exit polls by Harris, Gallup, the Tarrance Group, and Times Mirror, she adds, discovered that as many as 27 million voters are under the impression that they are either members, affiliated members, or associate members of the NRA. The true number is 3.2 million, says Metaksa, dwarfing Handgun Control Inc.'s 1 million and less than a tenth of the imagined figure.

Membership rolls, of course, can be manipulated easily enough, but the bottom line is that the NRA often prospers after criticism for staking out an "extreme" position, suggesting that in many places the organization's positions and methods are considered reasonable. Kopel offers a case study from 1988. The issue was plastic guns, which can pass through metal detectors unnoticed. The NRA, to the horror of many, opposed an outright ban and instead backed legislation that would not affect guns already in circulation but would require future guns to contain a verifiable amount of metal. *Newsweek* took to dreaming aloud: "That kind of tunnel vision could damage the NRA more than any gun-control group has managed to do . . . This time the gun lobby may have shot itself in the foot." The Senate rejected the plastic gun ban and accepted the NRA compromise.

To rub in the point, Kopel resurrects a poll by former Carter aide Patrick Caddell which asked, among other things, if Americans would be more likely to back gun legislation supported by such prominent people and organizations as Martin Luther King Jr., the National Center to Control Handguns, and the NRA itself. Endorsement by *any* of these entities, the poll discovered, would improve the prospects of a bill's passage. At the same time, the pollsters found, an endorsement by the wrong party would incline a majority to support the opposing position. Three such negative influences were the Smith & Wesson Company, "business groups," and "your local paper."

The "extreme positions" argument has also failed to diminish the NRA's relationship with state legislators—a fact granted by many of the NRA's most dedicated enemies, including Bill Clinton. "Approving concealed-carry laws has nearly become a national pastime," says Metaksa, who points out that 10 states passed laws this year making it possible for citizens to obtain concealed weapons permits. She also points to Oregon as a good example of NRA clout: "We supported three pieces of legislation: an instant check bill, a preemption bill to make state laws uniform, and a bill to protect shooting ranges. The governor signed the instant check and vetoed the other two. Then the legislature attached the shooting range measure to an appropriations bill and the governor signed it. The legislature overrode the veto on the pre-preemption bill, and they were successful in overriding vetoes in only one of 57 attempts."

The 1994 elections are an even greater source of pride for the NRA. Though their analysis is disputed by gun-control groups, especially the assertion that former Speaker Tom Foley was felled by the gun lobby, the fact is, the NRA's version has been endorsed, at least in part, by Clinton himself. As Kopel relates in his book, *Guns: Who Should Have Them?*, several weeks after the November 1994 elections, "President Clinton telephoned one of the leading Democratic supporters of the 'assault weapon' ban. After congratulating the Congressman on his reelection, the president opined that the 'assault weapon' ban had cost the Democrats twenty-one seats in the House of Representatives. Clinton later told the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer* that the 'assault weapon' issue and the NRA's efforts had given the Republicans 20 addi-

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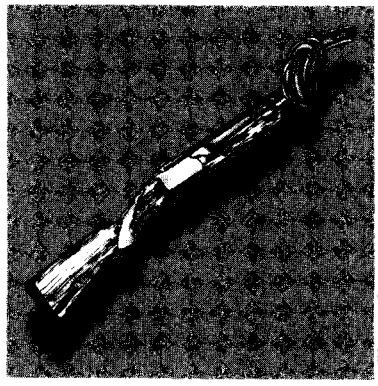
tional seats. If the president was correct, then the gun ban was a decisive factor in the Republicans' taking of the House of Representatives. (The Republicans won a fourteen-seat majority meaning that without the twenty or twenty-one 'assault-weapon' victories, they would have remained in the minority.)"

Kopel further supports his analysis by citing an election roundup in *Campaigns and Elections* magazine "which identified numerous congressional races in which the winning (pro-gun) candidate's margin of victory was smaller (often much smaller) than the number of self-identified NRA supporters in the district (or state)."

Soldier of Fortune's Brown recollects, with some glee, that opposing the assault-weapon ban was also said to be a sign of extremism, when, in fact, *supporting* it turned out to be costly. "Look at that ridiculous piece of legislation," he says. "All it did, pretty much, was say you couldn't have a gun with a flash suppressor and a bayonet mount. Now, how many Americans are being robbed at bayonet point? Not too damn many. But for those two things, Clinton gave up control of Congress."


Le'Herman Payton

All of this may be true, and yet the NRA could still be in for difficult times. If concern about gun-related violence reaches a desperate pitch, attitudes toward gun-control could change. Desperate people are inclined toward desperate actions. The number of adolescent males is going to rise 20 percent or so by the year 2015. Even in the best of circumstances, adolescent males tend to be the most violent members of the human family, and many of the upcoming generation will grow up without the benefit of fathers. Given these circumstances, it isn't difficult to imagine the violent crime rate rising significantly in the coming years, and if it does, gun prohibitionists will find it easier to make their case.

Mike Beard cites a University of California study which concludes that in the last seven years of this century there will be 300,000 deaths by firearms in the U.S.—100,000 of those will be children under the age of 15. The solution offered by Beard's organization will appeal to increasing numbers of panic-stricken citizens, including some gun owners, especially those who own only rifles and shotguns: "We say up front that our ultimate goal is a ban on the manufacture, sale and private possession of handguns."

If more and more children are injured or killed in gun-related deaths, legions of Sarah Bradys will come forward, and their efforts will not be easily rebuffed. In such an environment, pro-gunners who consider rhetorical excess a necessary component of firm advocacy will have a difficult time of it.

And that is not the only difficulty the NRA will face. The opposition intends to take the battle over gun ownership to the NRA's own turf. Beard acknowledges that the NRA has tremendous clout at the state level and concedes that part of the reason for the NRA's success is the decision by gun-control groups to concentrate their efforts on Washington. Increasingly, Beard promises, his compatriots will take their cause to the provinces—which is why the NRA, though the membership favorite today, will need to attract supporters from beyond the hard core.

A good way for the NRA to accomplish this would be for it to continue programs that appeal to mainstream Americans. Besides its purely gun-related victories, the NRA has been involved in judicial reform and crime prevention programs. Its "Refuse to be a Victim" program for women, for instance, has enjoyed significant popular support. These are the types of activities that will go a long way toward helping the NRA stake out its position as a group dedicated to preserving the Second Amendment and make it more difficult for opponents smear campaigns to succeed.

Tanya Metaksa remains confident the NRA is on the right track, and not just because of its crime-prevention programs: "We are not some extreme, anti-government organization. We advocate changing laws through the legislative process, and changing legislators' minds through the political process. If people are really interested in protecting their Second Amendment rights, they are going about it in a strange way by going after the NRA, whose critics use a hostile media to spread rumor and innuendo based on half-truths."

Perhaps, but voters will have to continue to see it Metaksa's way as well. If hubris leads the NRA to make decisions that jeopardize its standing, and allows itself to be easily characterized as a fringe group by the media and gun-control advocates, then it should be expected that citizens will find some other group to do their bidding. With annual revenues approaching $150 million, the NRA is a tempting target for competition from gun advocates who may be willing to temper their ire as they defend their Second Amendment rights. ♦

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Gloria in False Excelsis

By Noemie Emery

Picture Gloria Steinem with a homely face. A squat body. A quiet life in the suburbs, with one man and a cat. Who then would read Carolyn Heilbrun's *The Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem* (Dial Press, 451 pages, $24.95), a new account of her life and adventures? Who, outside the small country of radical politics, would care for her theories, without the twitch, the glitch, the incongruity, that turns work into celebrity, name into money, and fame into gold? Gloria Steinem, the star of the movement that insists women should not be judged by their looks, seen as sex objects, or judged by male consorts, is famous mainly as a beautiful woman who has slept with many great men.

Like Jane Fonda, whom she somewhat resembles, she is a novel-in-progress, an ongoing saga, always waiting on the next development. About the same time Steinem embarked on her radical mission, the one-time Barbarella turned into a political activist, moved to a tract house with one of the Chicago Seven, and became a feminist heroine, denouncing the rich and the market economy. Later, Fonda had breast implants, married a billionaire businessman, and moved into his mansion. Steinem, too, recently dated a billionaire businessman, and moved in East Hampton society. The princess turned into a frog, and then seemed to turn back again.

Before Steinem, Heilbrun had created another feminist heroine in a series of detective novels: Kate Fansler, like Heilbrun a professor of English at Columbia University. The crimes Kate Fansler investigates take place in the sort of atmosphere in which the chance to write the official biography of a middling novelist is readily accepted as a motive for murder, while murder itself is seen as less dire than sexism, classism, or macho behavior in the canon of sins. Fansler, who looks a great deal like Steinem, is wholly a creature of Heilbrun's own fancy, and a key to the contradictory mind of the left. Heilbrun the feminist is against sexism, racism, lookism, Eurocentric and phallocentric standards, the native class system, and inherited wealth. But her creation, Kate Fansler, resembles the dazzling Katharine Hepburn—an uber-WASP from an old, moneyed family. She has rejected her family's traditional politics, but not its income, on which she leads a privileged existence. With this in mind, Heilbrun is ideally poised to deal with, rationalize, or explain away the central fascination of Steinem's existence: Steinem is the star of a cause who promotes her agenda by means she affects to despise.

Probably because she could not avoid it completely, Heilbrun gives a token nod to this dissonance: "Steinem had to know that she is good-looking. What she seems to be saying here is that she does not want to believe that her looks are counted more important than her years of work." What Steinem and Heilbrun do not seem to realize is that, as far as Steinem's *distinctive* contribution to feminism is rated, her looks *are* her work. Her ideas, her theories, her professional skills at writing and editing, are not all that different from those of 25 other women, of whom the public knows little. It has ever been her looks, her glamour, her clothes, the high-profile affairs with media stars, sports stars, aides to ex-presidents, that crashed their way through the obscurity barrier, drawing the attention of millions of people with little real interest in radical politics, who wanted to read of, and of course look at, her. The incongruity was a key element of what made her fascinating.

"What gets everyone about Steinem the liberationist is that she doesn't have to," said *Newsweek* in a 1971 story that featured her face on the cover, flagging the article "A Liberated Woman Despite Beauty, Chic, and Success." Some months later, *McCall's* called her "a household word . . . the most viable of all the activists . . . in bell-bottoms and jersey body shirt, tinted glasses and a lion's mane that reaches below her shoulder-blades, she looks like a life-size, counter-culture Barbie Doll."

In her history of the feminist movement, *The Sisterhood*, Marcia Cohen nails it: "'Friends, sisters,' [Steinem] would usually begin, 'we're not glamorous creatures who come to you from the outside,' all the while looking very glamorous in her leotard and tight jeans." Heilbrun finds something "grating" in the egregious contrasts. Cohen is more emphatic: "Meanwhile, Gloria's glittering lifestyle, which she clearly had no intention of relinquishing, continued. By the mid-1980s, she was dating a man who was not only massively wealthy, but whose high

Noemie Emery is working on a study of the selling of political families called Sex, War and Wives.

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stakes financial practices offended many. . . . Many believed that the contrast between Gloria's glamorous life and her public pronouncements that she—like all other women—was still an oppressed victim of a patriarchal style . . . was also disorienting."

From the very beginning of her fame, Steinem seemed to follow one path. She made her name with an expose of the Playboy clubs she wrote for the old *Show* magazine, when she sought work as a bunny, and wrote a funny, lethal account of the experience. It set the tone for the standard performance: She condemned the culture but in a glitzy piece, amply illustrated with photos of her, looking every inch the bunny in her suit. An editor quoted by Cohen recalled a lunch in the late 60s when Steinem spoke seriously, and a little tendentiously, about weighty matters, but came to the table in thigh-high boots and a mass of gold jewelry, through a force-field of masculine eyes. "Heads turned . . . Gloria looked like a Barbie Doll [that term again], a department store mannequin, which made it absolutely amazing when she actually talked." With this went a deferential manner—"incredibly flattering"—that made men feel important.

As Nora Ephron wrote, she projected "a calm, peaceful, subdued quality" completely at odds with the words she was saying. She was thus perceived as being gentle and moderate, while expressing such views as that religion existed to support a white racist culture; that western classics expressed hatred for women in general; and that "traditional marriage" as an institution fell somewhere between a brothel and a jail. This too had a political value: Heilbrun admits that Steinem reassured women, frightened of contracting a masculine image. Cohen admits, as Heilbrun does not, that it was also useful in seducing men. "Steinem was so good looking," a friend told Cohen, after a male friend had raved to her about Gloria. "It never dawned on him that a woman with that kind of face or figure would be bitter or resentful of men. Terrific! I thought. It was a marvelous opportunity. They couldn't read the signals . . . we had the advantage of surprise."

Gloria Steinem

Kent Lemon

How could Steinem *not* know what she was doing? In a debate with Helen Gurley Brown, she had accused the original *Cosmopolitan* girl of demeaning women by urging them to dissemble and flatter. But, Cohen tells us, "Helen would insist that Gloria herself had used many of the subtle male-flattering techniques that she so abhorred." Steinem would continue to insist that her looks, dress, and manner were "irrelevant," and would become testy when pressured. Yet her actions were increasingly dissonant: In 1983, she posed for *People* in a bubble bath—and to publicize a new book of essays, one of which roundly attacked the "commercial, idealized, feminine image" pushed, one might imagine, by men. As Steinem herself wrote in the *People* article, "We need the regular sight of our diverse reality to wear away the plastic-stereotyped-perfect image against which we've been encouraged to measure ourselves." But she *is* this ideal, plastic image. Who publicizes a *political* book, dressed mainly in bubbles? Gloria Steinem is the Big Tease of the feminist movement, luring the men to the tents, whence they are bludgeoned with dogma. But is this what they came in to buy?

A glamour girl leading a grim little movement, Steinem intrigues as a study in contrasts,

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which she cannot perceive or admit. So too her own cause and her function within it, which seem to be all of a piece. In the name of liberation, it seeks to impose a rigid thought system on a vast and diverse group of people. She claims to speak for a great many women whose values she simultaneously seems to despise. As a political lobby, feminists have a right to organize, rally, campaign, push their causes, and try to recruit other people. It is only when they confuse this with working for "women" that things tend to get strange.

Steinem and her allies urge women of all parties to vote by gender, on the grounds that we need more "people who look the way we do" in office. But Steinem told a group of woman Democrats, re Mrs. Thatcher, "We must not support those who look like us and sound like them." When are women not women, for practical purposes? When feminists say so. Sisterhood is powerful, except when it isn't: a good reason, it seems, to elect Democrat Barbara Boxer but not to elect Republican Olympia Snowe. Women's voices are more authentic than men's, except when opposing abortion. Women's complaints should be honored as gospel, unless Paula Jones makes them. Neither Heilbrun nor Steinem seems to find this a problem. But this *is* the problem.

Steinem calls women a whole "caste" of people, despised as a group by the total male culture, and possessing one common political interest. She, Heilbrun, and others think themselves able to speak for this interest, despite repeated and extensive evidence that, on many key issues, they and most women are miles apart. Steinem, Heilbrun says, has an "inherent dislike of middle-class culture." Most women in the western world are middle class. Most women are religious and want to get married. Steinem and Heilbrun despise religion as serving the white male establishment. Though married, Heilbrun has called marriage "death for women as individuals," "the traditional haven for the one sex, conditioned on the mutilation of the other," an institution deserving of "scorn." Most women don't consider "traditional marriage" to be "prostitution," as Steinem once called it. Nor do they think, as does Heilbrun, that "patriarchy and fascism are intimately related," or that the "heterosexual plot," as she calls it, is behind the class system. They do not think the "feminine role" a complete imposition. To most women, abortion is not a "sacrament," but an agonizing dilemma. A great many want it curtailed.

Why are people like Heilbrun and Steinem so ready to say what is true of all women? Because it *is* true—of all women they know. A cause—a life-style—is a small town, a self-selected small neighborhood, where people, no matter how much they move through the country, always meet people like themselves. Believing too much in the truth of their slogan, "the personal is the political," they have no hesitation in distilling their stories, reinforcing them with those of their friends and allies, and projecting them out onto millions of others, as the stories of women at large.

Carolyn Heilbrun

Kent Lemon

It never seems to occur to them that 1) this is a self-selecting process, and that those who do not concur would never approach them; 2) that sometimes the personal *is* personal and not a common experience; and 3) that for each voice they hear, there are millions of others, whose conclusions are different, but who have as much right as they do to claim themselves

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as representatives of other women's lives. Somehow, these other voices have never made it into their calculus. In the lovely free world of feminist dogma, one song is allowed to be heard.

The cause that began in a justified rebellion against limitations laid down by others has become exactly as narrow and bigoted. Like the worst of the fogies they once rose to challenge, they are dogmatic, pedantic, self-righteous, and dense. There is only One Truth, and only they know it. There is only one female ideal. Steinem and Heilbrun urge women to look to their own lives and instincts to counter male dogma; to trust the "skeptical self" above myths told by others. Fine. Millions of women have posed their own selves against myths told by feminist dogma, and found it absurd.

As Steinem warns, "the status quo protects itself by punishing all challenges. . . . Women who are conforming to society's expectations view the nonconformists with justifiable alarm." Women who conform to the feminists' standards see challengers as threats to their own claims of gender authority, and try to punish or denigrate them by calling them Quislings, cowards, people too stupid or scared to know better, or—this is a favorite—Threatened by Change. As a last resort, they call them Unnatural Women, a chestnut once used by Victorian dodos, for women who wanted careers. In 1993, Steinem went to Texas to call senatorial candidate Kay Bailey Hutchison a "female impersonator" for favoring lower taxes and abortion restrictions. Hutchison won that election, and the one after, by more than a two-to-one margin. Meanwhile, the feminist governor lost.

These Texas elections explain the whole matter. The feminist premise is false. There is a movement, but it is only part of the picture. There is no Women's Voice, but a whole range of voices. They are not united but different, diverse. They are left, right, and all shades of the center. They are pro-choice and pro-life, and all stations between. The Women's Caucus itself is no longer a monolith. The liberal Democratic pro-choice class of 1992 was succeeded by the conservative Republican pro-life class of 1994. The prime boomer stars are Mary Matalin and Peggy Noonan, who worked for Bush and Reagan. Articulate young women are in liberal think tanks, but they are also at the Heritage Foundation. They write liberal and conservative columns. They write for the *Washington Times.*

How does this play out in the world of Carolyn Heilbrun and Gloria Steinem? It doesn't. At all. Heilbrun writes deep in her own mental bunker, fighting not only the frightening Other, but the terrible force of the real. She posits an ultimate light-and-dark struggle; the unified feminist Party of Progress, opposing the Forces of Night. Night, of course, is the right-wing agenda, "a worldwide backlash . . . defined by established religions, and neoconservative ideals." These blocs, of course, are all hostile to women. "How to counter this backlash, particularly in the light of its extensive financing . . . is the major question *women the world over* face." (The italics are mine.)

But women are *in* the "established religions." More women are in the Christian Coalition than in NOW and the abortion lobbies put together. The leading Republican candidates are married to professional women with resumes as impressive as Hillary Clinton's. Pat Buchanan's campaigns are run by . . . his sister, an assertive, no-holds-barred political operative, whose life does the feminists proud.

A gentle, harmonious book on a conflict-filled subject, *The Education of a Woman* seems muffled, like oars. Part of the story appears to be missing. Lines of inquiry emerge that are never admitted, much less followed to their logical conclusion. Much of the action takes place offstage. The cause is the absolute synergy between the Heilbrun and Steinem agendas: Heilbrun seems less to be looking *at* Steinem than to be looking out, through her eyes. Without the intimacy of true autobiography, or the context supplied by the dispassionate distance of biography, this book falls between the two: a once-removed, second-stage, less than personal project, without context or criticism, but larded with the sort of gauzy reverence no one would dare lavish on himself.

But is Heilbrun in Steinem's brain; or is Steinem in hers? Already the source of a fictional heroine, Heilbrun has worked a variation on the theme. Her Gloria Steinem is Kate Fansler's cousin, from the underprivileged side of the family, minus the trust fund, but with even more glamour and rich, famous friends.

Lacking the distance that could give it authority, Heilbrun's biography reads like one of her Fansler novels—an entertainment, laced with political comments, and following a well-tested formula. In it, a good-looking woman, in posh surroundings, gets up to some interesting things. It makes you want to try for the paperback jacket:

From the streets of Bengal to the vistas of the Hamptons, from Madison Avenue to the Upper West Side, the action is brisk, the cast star-studded, the milieus diverting. The Education of a Woman: The Life of Gloria Steinem *is a great read; politics, sex, and the magazine business—a literary version of CBS's prime-time soap opera,* Central Park West. *Buy it today.* ♦

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Language

THE JOYS OF GIBBERISH

By Robert Weissberg

The humanities and social sciences are sinking into linguistic obscurity. This complaint is largely the province of conservatives, who relentlessly parade excerpts from current scholarly books and journals and ask, "Is this English?"

"Can an educated person ever hope to understand the author's intent?" moans Roger Kimball of the *New Criterion* as he heaps contumely on the "jargon-laden opacity" infecting much of modern literary studies. Charles Sykes's *Profscam* offers a virtual catalogue of prose tortured in the name of science. Jacques Barzun of Columbia University argues that much of contemporary historical analysis is unreadable. In political science, my own field, the norm of jargonistic incomprehensibility is so entrenched that graduate methodology seminars are informally described as training to decipher journal articles ("professional literacy"). The Ivory Tower and the Tower of Babel are becoming indistinguishable.

Such criticisms assume, of course, that obscurity and incoherence are evils. After all, the purpose of writing is to communicate, and if sentences and paragraphs cannot be decoded, what purpose do they serve? Even worse, opaque, tortured writing can corrode clear thinking, much as alcohol may destroy judgment. Eventually, the argument continues, reasoned intellectual discourse itself becomes impossible. And, in the language of economics, "work force quality" will decline, since only fools will master obscurantism, and nobody—save the deranged—will extract value from these scholarly labors. Libraries will spend fortunes warehousing unreadable books and articles that will, justifiably, remain unread. It would be as if academics returned to Latin (and bad Latin, to boot). Bad prose is ushering in not a new Dark Ages, but a new Opaque Age.

I think that conservatives protest too much. The "jargon-laden opacity" infecting academic writing may actually be a pretty good deal, both politically and culturally. This is not to say that defenders of righteous thinking should celebrate it or even moderate our grumbling. Rather, a little reasoning demonstrates that matters could be far worse. More importantly, incomprehensibility serves as a benign and ethical censorship device. In an ironic, perverse way, impenetrable, convoluted jargon is an ally in the political war of ideas. Let us praise high-sounding gibberish.

Our defense of academic obscurantism begins with the simple observation that reform is probably impossible. Collecting and displaying snippets of academic and literary babble is a therapeutic hobby, not a practical effort at amelioration. Gloat as we may over compulsory clear-writing workshops for our harebrained colleagues, this will not happen. Centuries will pass before professors worry about textual harassment or offending verbs, adjectives, and nouns. Compulsory workshops on teaching for senior faculty will come before we see a graduate-level *Elements of Style*. Nor will our hectoring and ridicule have an impact—they've heard it all before, probably starting with fifth-grade English. Their likely rejoinder to charges of premeditated bad prose is that their messages would blaze forth if the reader took a few good courses in multidimensional scaling, econometrics, deconstruction, feminist theory or some other literary vice du jour. For the career purveyor of mumbo jumbo, a reader's lack of understanding reflects a failure "to keep up with the latest developments in the field."

Seizing control of graduate education to breed a new generation of clear-writing academics is equally hopeless. We are outnumbered. More important, as most of us know from personal experience, a version of Gresham's Law governs academic publication. Clearly written, jargonless articles shamelessly displaying a beginning, middle, and end are almost always dismissed as "journalistic." Opacity is a badge signifying acceptance of professional norms. To commit good writing brands one an untrained outsider. Thus, imploring graduate students to write clearly imperils their careers. Not to instruct in the art of talking in tongues is irresponsible teaching; for bad writing defeats good writing in vita building.

Kimball strongly suggests a link between radicalism and opacity in his study of literary criticism. The days when Proletarian-wannabe lefties wrote straightforward prose to woo the working folk are over. Today's champions of the oppressed prattle to each other, not the oppressed. A visiting Martian would surely conclude that the purpose of much leftish scholarship is to cloud minds. Try to imagine liberal academics criticizing one another for their inability to communicate (such criticism is easily

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dismissed as "elitism" and endorsing "arbitrary standards of language").

By contrast, conservative academics seem to make a decent effort at clarity. The works of Charles Murray, Thomas Sowell, James Q. Wilson, Walter Williams, and even Milton Friedman are complex and scholarly, yet generally accessible to the educated reader. Almost every article in *The Public Interest* is readable, even though its editors do not view themselves as journalistic popularizers. Conservatives rarely dress up analysis with abstruse terminology, methodological digressions, unnecessary equations, computer-generated graphics, a twisted vocabulary, and other impediments to understanding. Indeed, books like *Losing Ground* and *The Bell Curve* go to great lengths to domesticate statistical complexity.

This difference in style, I believe, is rooted in different desires to communicate. Those caring deeply about informing their readers will generally try to write clearly without an esoteric vocabulary. Contemporary conservatives, for the most part, would rather convince than impress. They are on a mission, and missionaries must deny themselves the facile pleasures of talking high-sounding cant to the savages. In a sense, the contemporary conservative occupies a position held by the pre-1960s liberal-left writer. The battle is to be won by argument; clear prose and reason prevail over the urge to blurt out fancy long-winded nonsense.

It follows from all this that the subversion of clear writing is not an accidental technical shortcoming. It occurs because the ideas themselves cannot survive scrutiny if they are sharply stated. Gibberish is necessary, akin to a chemical additive to enhance food or hide an odor. The liberal academic venturing forth to discuss, say, racial differences in scientific accomplishment resembles a 50-year-old wo-

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man going to a singles bar: flaws must be carefully covered with expensive make-up, well-placed jewelry, and fashionable clothing. Whereas the young competition can dress in a revealing tee-shirt and jeans, our 50-year-old must painstakingly construct the illusion of beauty by drawing attention away from substance. Indeed, the young competitor knows full well that clarity of exposure gives the advantage.

The message should be evident: Exhortations by conservatives for academics to communicate better are unneeded, if not dangerous. Let the professional obscurantists continue to issue unreadable articles and books. Think of this infatuation with gibberish as a form of self-imposed quarantine. Indeed, we may have discovered how society's immune system works: Scholarly rubbish is captured by invisible jargon antibodies, made unintelligible to all but the rubbish carriers, and then shipped off to toxic waste dumps located in major research libraries. To be blunt, compulsive obscurantism is society's natural immunity mechanism. A cure for compulsive talking in tongues would inflict on society a small army of clear-talking, straight-thinking, persuasive deconstructionists, feminists, Marxists, and other species of the tenured left. Far better to encourage their continuing assault on clear writing until their ability to communicate atrophies completely. In the meantime, conservatives can experience all the joys of shamelessly flaunting their naked ideas in public. ♦

Movies

The Silicone Letter

By John Podhoretz

Demi Moore has large breasts, and she loves to show them. Why shouldn't she? They're not really hers anyway, since they are less the handiwork of God than Dow Corning, Inc., makers of the silicone-gel packet. Besides which, Moore plainly says that her willingness to bare all—or, at least, every inch of her that has been approved for public display by her plastic surgeon and *Vanity Fair* photographer Annie Leibovitz—is what makes her worth $12 million a picture.

True, she didn't receive quite that much to play Hester Prynne, perhaps the most memorable female character in American literature, in the new film version of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. That paycheck came when she was cast in *Strip Tease*, due out this Christmas, in which she plays Mother Teresa—I mean, a stripper. Fear not, dear reader; just because Moore didn't get $12 mil doesn't mean you have to wait until Christmas to get a look at her in the altogether. And if a great American novel is desecrated in the process, who cares? What are you, some kind of elitist?

Moore makes sure that Hester Prynne shows up topless, and in a bathtub, no less, reminiscent not only of the ablutions of the 17th century Massachusetts Bay Puritans but also of *About Last Night*, the movie Moore made with Rob Lowe back in 1985, some time before she made the acquaintance of Dow Corning. Hester stands in her tub, slowly washing herself—they must have dubbed out the sound of the silicon splashing around in there—as she thinks about that gorgeous hunk, the Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale (Gary Oldman), whom she had earlier espied swimming naked in the woods. Suddenly her hands disappear from view, she arches her head back, and . . . can it be? Yes, it can: Hester Prynne seems to be, umm, touching herself.

And man oh man, who could blame her? After all, she got to see not only the tortured minister's tush, but also a whisper of his . . . well, modesty forbids me from mentioning the specific part of Oldman's body that flits by for just a moment. But suffice it to say: You gals who love the male ecdysiasts at Chippendale's, this *Scarlet Letter* is for you!

Perhaps you don't recall the bathtub masturbation scene in the original novel. You've probably also forgotten Dimmesdale's nude swimming scene. How about the scene where Hester is nearly raped by the son of the governor of Massachusetts Bay? Or the one where Hester's long-missing husband, the brilliant scholar who comes to be known as Chillingworth, engages in a little marital rape himself? Or the one in which Chillingworth scalps the governor's son, believing him to be Dimmesdale? Or the one where an Indian leader named Metacomet storms Boston, kills all the bad Puritans, saves the city's Christian Indians, and rescues Hester from being hanged as a witch?

None of this sounds familiar? How about this exchange:

DIMMESDALE: God help me, Hester, I love thee!

HESTER: I love thee, too!

Or this one, on the scaffold where Hester is sentenced to wear the scarlet A as a mark perpetually signifying her adulterous behavior:

GOVERNOR: Hester Prynne,

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do you deny you have sinned?

HESTER: I believe I have sinned in your eyes, but who knows if Heaven shares your views?

Hester tells the governor that the letter "is a badge not of my shame, but of your own!" Indeed, she does little after being compelled to wear the "A" but walk around yelling at everybody, even her boyfriend with the cute tush. "You rush to your own ruin," she says, shaking a finger at Dimmesdale, "and deny my right to stand up to their hypocrisy!"

The movie, written by Douglas Day Stewart and directed by Roland Joffe, is a particularly deranged example of neo-Bowdlerization. The original Bowdler, you may recall, was the 19th century editor who cut out all the sex from Shakespeare's plays in a fit of prudery. Today's Bowdlers engage in a kind of reverse prudery. They insist that any great work of art which fails to conform to their taste for explicit sex and leftist politics must and should be revised to conform to the fashionable tastes of the moment.

Usually, these revisions are theoretical, the work of academics who take joy in releasing the Ebola-like virus of deconstructionism on the literature of the past with the intention of destroying it. Now, in a $40 million work of soft-core pornography, Hollywood morons are working the same street as the Yale English department. As director Joffe has said: "To my amazement, as I reread the novel, it seemed there was an entire other book hidden inside. I thought: Wouldn't it be wonderful to pry open the pages and look deeper into the story? Hawthorne is so clearly in love with Hester Prynne but he is also terrified of her. The whole book seems to yearn to set her free, but ultimately, Hawthorne can't. He has pinned Hester like a butterfly and I thought it would be wonderful to pull the pin out of her and see her fly."

These astonishing words could only have come out of the mouth of a man who considers himself educated, cultivated, and, as they say these days, "evolved"—more evolved, certainly, than Hawthorne, a writer Joffe nonsensically describes as terrified by the sexuality of a woman he himself created out of whole-cloth. The startling impertinence of Joffe's *Scarlet Letter* is of a piece with today's Hollywood, where the world's most fantastically greedy people love to give speeches condemning greed at ceremonies where they bestow unearned awards upon one another.

Sean Delonas

In Hollywood's Golden Age, the notorious vulgarian dictators who ran the movie studios had a totemic respect for literature like *The Scarlet Letter*. They didn't read it—couldn't possibly understand it—but they respected it and feared it. Samuel Goldwyn, whose misuse of the English language was legendary, once moved heaven and earth to bring the aged George Bernard Shaw to Hollywood to discuss how they might work together. "The problem, Mr. Goldwyn," Shaw is reputed to have said at the end of the meeting, "is that you are interested in Art, whereas I am only interested in money."

Hawthorne was a writer of dark and unsettling imagination, one whose greatest work climaxes with the revelation that the letter "A" has literally engraved itself on the chest of the adulterous Dimmesdale. But could Hawthorne have imagined an American future in which the nation's most beautiful women would pay thousands upon thousands of dollars to have goo inserted into their breasts by choice?

Actually, maybe he could have. Just because he was the foremost American chronicler of Puritan life, Hawthorne has often been mistaken for a Puritan himself—not least by Joffe—when he was anything but. Indeed, at one point, Hawthorne was a wide-eyed radical, a follower of a crackpot philosophy of personal liberation, socialism, and antinomianism that finally found its moment in the sun during the counterculture craze of the 1960s.

The Scarlet Letter is itself a radical piece of work—a tragedy about sin in which the villains are not the sinners but those who seek to judge and avenge sin itself. "What we did," Hester tells Dimmesdale, who is still in agony seven years after their one liaison, "had a consecration of its own." This is, not surprisingly, one of the few lines from the novel that make it into the movie.

Perhaps Hawthorne, the possessor of a genuinely tragic sensibility, would have appreciated the irony that he might share a tiny portion of the blame for the cinematic mockery that Demi Moore and her merry band of insanely tasteless hacks have made of his masterpiece. ♦

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The New York Times

Parody

Essay

WILLIAM SAFIRE

Reading Safire's Mind

WASHINGTON

Some right-wing columnists—Paulie, Novakio, Sam "You Made the Pants Too Long" Francis—might be having a little trouble in the Age of Newtstock, but not I. (Correct use of the first person, but maybe a little pretentious? *Pace* Kant and Edwin Newman, but some standards are meant to be violated.)

Love their shoes, but I didn't exactly Stride-Rite when Pete Wilson pulled out of the Republican prez derby, since I had made such a show of Richard Nixon's final prediction that the Gov of the Goldeneh Medineh would be facing "Bosnia Bill" Clinton in the final lap. Maybe the world will little note nor long remember (do I need quotation marks on that?) my Wilson call. I can always phone Ted Agnew and see if I can get that old-time nabob to natter some about Colin Powell.

E'en so, it's my time. If I find nothing of value to attack, I can always revert to my libertarian, fear-of-Big-Brother rap. (Reminder: Write Henry the K a thank-you note. That wiretap was the best thing that ever happened to me.) The new Internet censors are handing me a prime issue, especially good because I can call on Newtros-Newtros-Gingy's third wavery. Appealing to putatively classical-liberal instincts—love those—in our superstar-board House Sprechmeister only enhances my vaunted reputation for iconoclasm. (Is that a pleonasm?)

Hey, think it's easy being an iconoclast? Have to admit it is. Nothing simpler than getting praised for it, as I was across the glossies back in '92 when the target was George Bush's presidency. "Safire Nails Bush" was the intellectual equivalent of "Dog Bites Man"—my bubbe's dybbuk would have come back to haunt me if I hadn't—but how would Tina Brown and Art Cooper know that?

Figuring out how to be my own man in public is one of my strengths, along with short, scrappy sentences and a knack for issuing forth single-source rumors as though they were laws of physical nature. (Today's bulletin: A Russian general you've never heard of is about to steal a Ukranian nuke.)

Twenty years a columnist, and no sign of letup. They come and go—Schanberg (remember him?), Anna Quinrenina, the Floradora Girl—as I soldier on. As Tony Lewis's muttonchops get hairier, my speaking fees rise. I rise.

To Our Readers

Every six months, the Times changes the days on which its columnists appear. The new rotation is:

May Day—Anthony Lewis;
Memorial Day—Russell Baker;
Sale Day at Saks—Maureen Dowd;
Tisha B'av—Thomas L. Friedman;
Joseph Papp's Birthday—Frank Rich.

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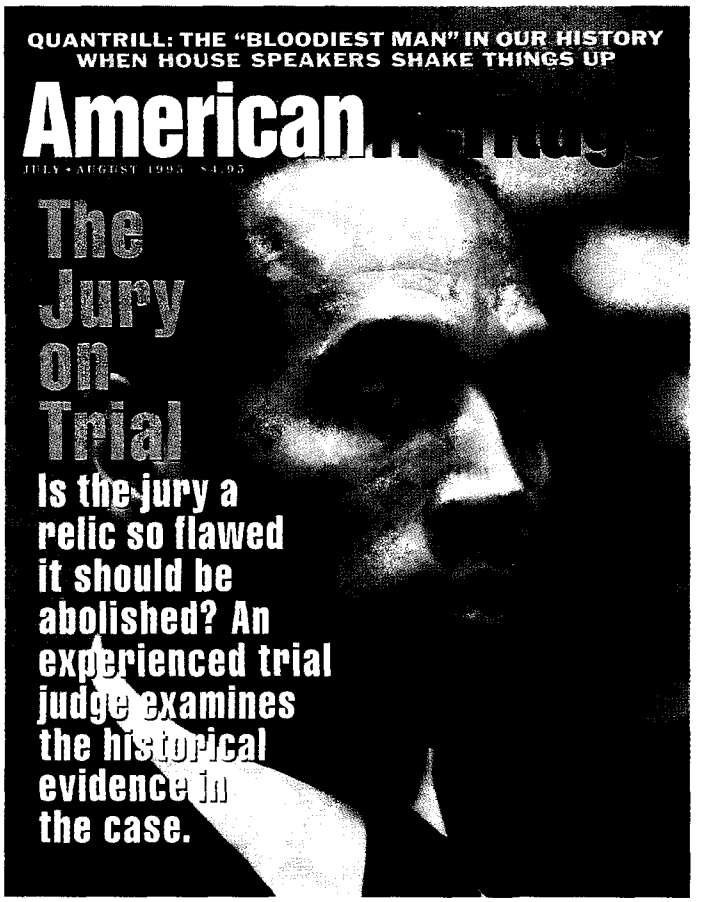
They Call This Justice?



Is trial by jury the essential underpinning of justice or a relic so flawed it should be abolished? A new problem—hardly. As far back as 1771, John Adams said that a decision by jurors "would be not better than a Decision by Lott." And while many people forget the lessons of the past, AMERICAN HERITAGE remembers. Eight times a year, we illuminate the past to shed new light on today's issues. It's called the Heritage Perspective, and over 300,000 of the nation's most affluent and influential subscribers don't find it anywhere else.

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